DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 331 904 UD 027 732

TITLE One Voice, One Future: A Latino Funding Agenda from the Latino Community and Its Leadership. The Los Angeles County Latino Assessment Study. Full Report. Tomas Rivera Center Working Paper.
INSTITUTION Tomas Rivera Center, Claremont, CA.
PUB DATE 90
NOTE 131p.
AVAILABLE FROM Tomas Rivera Center, 710 North College Avenue, Claremont, CA 91711.
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS *Community Development; Dropout Prevention; Economic Development; *Financial Support; *Hispanic Americans; Leadership Training; *Long Range Planning; Needs Assessment; *Political Power; Quality of Life; Urban Areas
IDENTIFIERS *California (Los Angeles); *Latinos

ABSTRACT

This report identifies funding priorities to assist governmental and philanthropic agencies in meeting the long-range needs of the Latino community of Los Angeles (California). Information was gathered from a community survey, a survey of Latino community leaders, and focus groups comprised of representatives from various sectors of the Latino community. Of the many needs identified, Latinos feel that the problems of women and children warrant special attention because of their acute vulnerability and historical neglect. In addition to funding, more attention needs to be focused on empowering individuals and organizations in the Latino community. The following primary funding priorities and strategies for meeting needs are discussed in detail: (1) political participation; (2) education; (3) economic development; and (4) leadership development. The following additional priorities are also discussed: (1) health; (2) social services; (3) immigration; (4) legal services; (5) crime; and (6) housing. Comprehensive plans designed to attack the larger problems facing Latinos should be developed based on these priorities. Statistical data are presented in 64 tables and 16 graphs. (FMW)

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One Voice, One Future

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A Latino Funding Agenda from the Latino Community and its Leadership

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The Tomás Rivera Center is a national, nonprofit institute for policy studies which began operating in January 1985 with the support of major grants from the Carnegie Corporation of New York, The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, The James Irvine Foundation and the Times Mirror Foundation. Its mission is to assist policymakers in understanding the issues affecting the quality of life of the Mexican-origin and larger Hispanic population of the United States.

The center is dedicated to the memory of one of its founders, the late Tomás Rivera (1935-1984), distinguished educator, prizewinning writer, and, at the time of his death, chancellor of the University of California, Riverside.

One Voice, One Future:
A Latino Funding Agenda from the Latino Community and Its Leadership

The Los Angeles County Latino Assessment Study
Full Report

Edited by
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A Tomás Rivera Center Working Paper

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS *iii*

STUDY SUMMARY *ix*

Methodology *x*

Primary Funding Priorities *xiii*

Political Participation *xiv*
Education *xvi*
Economic Development *xviii*
Leadership Development *xx*

Additional Funding Priorities *xxi*

Health *xxi*
Social Services *xxii*
Immigration *xxiii*
Legal Services *xxiii*
Crime *xxiv*
Housing *xxiv*

Next Steps *xxv*

Summary Review of Recommendations for Funding Priorities *xxvi*

CHAPTER 1. LOS ANGELES COUNTY LATINO COMMUNITY PROFILE, BY ANGEL SANCHEZ *1*

Population Growth *2*

Educational Attainment *5*

Employment *8*

Income *14*

Conclusion *16*

CHAPTER 2. LOS ANGELES COUNTY LATINO HOUSEHOLD SURVEY, BY LEOBARDO ESTRADA AND JULIE SOLIS *17*

Methodology *17*

Background Characteristics *17*

Community Opinions and Attitudes *29*

Problems Faced by Latino Families and Latinos in General *44*

Implications for Los Angeles County *47*

Conclusion *50*

CHAPTER 3. LOS ANGELES COUNTY LATINO LEADERSHIP SURVEY, BY LEOBARDO ESTRADA AND MAURA HARRINGTON 53

Methodology 53

Characteristics of Latino Leaders 53

Comparison of Salient Policy Issues 54

Policy Areas of Concern 55

Resolution of Policy Concerns 58

Implications for Los Angeles County 76

CHAPTER 4. LOS ANGELES COUNTY LATINO FOCUS GROUP ACTIVITY, BY JULIE SOLIS 81

Methodology 81

Findings 82

Conclusion 96

LIST OF TABLES

CHAPTER 1

Table 1.1. Population Growth in Los Angeles County, by Race or Ethnicity, 1920-2000 *4*

CHAPTER 2

Table 2.1. General Background Characteristics *18*

Table 2.2. Language Proficiency, by Language Preference *19*

Table 2.3. Language Preference, by Educational Attainment *19*

Table 2.4. Country of Origin *20*

Table 2.5. Residency Status *20*

Table 2.6. Reasons Eligible Persons Do Not Apply for Amnesty *21*

Table 2.7. Ethnic Identification *21*

Table 2.8. Importance of Latino Culture, by Level of Education *22*

Table 2.9. Use of Latino-owned Businesses, by Level of Education *22*

Table 2.10. Highest Year of Schooling Completed, by Gender *23*

Table 2.11. Degrees Conferred to Persons Completing 12 or More Years of Schooling *23*

Table 2.12. Degrees Conferred, by Level of Education *24*

Table 2.13. Opinions on Busing, Year-Round Schooling, and Bilingual Education *24*

Table 2.14. Assessment of Quality of Education, by Language Preference *25*

Table 2.15. Reasons Given for Educational Attrition, by Level of Education *25*

Table 2.16. Employment Status, by Level of Education *26*

Table 2.17. Household Income, by Level of Education *27*

Table 2.18. Source of Income *27*

Table 2.19. Transportation to Work *28*

Table 2.20. Amount of Bus Usage *28*

Table 2.21. Type of Housing *28*

Table 2.22. Rating Public Services *29*

Table 2.23. Percentage Rating Public Services Good or Very Good, by Level of Education *30*

Table 2.24. Percentage Rating Public Services Good or Very Good, by Language Preference *30*

Table 2.25. Percentage of Latinos and Anglos Rating Public Services Good or Very Good *31*

Table 2.26. Rating Parks and Recreational Services, by Select Variables *32*

Table 2.27. Rating Crime as a Neighborhood Problem, by Level of Education *32*

Table 2.28. Rating Types of Neighborhood Crime as a Problem, by Level of Education *33*

Table 2.29. Percentage Viewing Select Crimes as a Big Problem, by Income Level *33*

Table 2.30. Rating Police Protection, by Level of Education *34*

Table 2.31. Rating Police Protection, by Neighborhood Composition *34*

Table 2.32. Rating Police Protection, by Evaluation of Police Respect for Latinos *34*

Table 2.33. Rating Personal Health, by Level of Education *35*

Table 2.34. Personal Health Resources, by Level of Education *36*

Table 2.35. Percentage Who Discuss Personal Problems with Family, by Level of Education *36*

Table 2.36. Use of Legal Resources, by Level of Education *37*

Table 2.37. Opinion on Race Relations, by Level of Education *37*

Table 2.38. Treatment of Racial Groups, by Level of Education *38*

Table 2.39. Latino and Anglo Ratings of Treatment of Racial Groups *38*

Table 2.40. Perception of Contribution Made by Various Groups, by Level of Education *39*

Table 2.41. Main Source of Information, by Level of Education *40*

Table 2.42. Portrayal of Latinos in English Language Media, by Level of Education *40*

Table 2.43. Rating Government Entities, by Level of Education *40*

Table 2.44. Percentage Rating Government Entities Good or Very Good, by Language Preference *41*

Table 2.45. Attitude toward Supporting the Contras and Israel, by Level of Education *41*

Table 2.46. Rating Own Ability to Affect Government, by Level of Education *42*

Table 2.47. Political Affiliation, by Level of Education *42*

Table 2.48. Political Participation of Latinos and Anglos *43*

Table 2.49. Percentage Who Were Registered and Voted in the Last Election, by Level of Education *43*

Table 2.50. Reasons Given for Not Registering or Not Voting in the Last Election, by Level of Education *44*

Table 2.51. Major Problems Facing Latino and Anglo Families *44*

Table 2.52. Major Problems Facing Latino Families, by Level of Education *45*

Table 2.53. Major Problems Facing Latinos in General *45*

Table 2.54. Ranking Major Problems Facing Latino Families in General, by Level of Education *46*

Table 2.55. Major Problems Facing Latinos in General, by Age *46*

Table 2.56. Major Problems Facing Latinos in General, by Gender *47*

CHAPTER 3

Table 3.1. Major Problems Facing Latinos in Los Angeles County *54*

Table 3.2. Ranking Policy Areas Concerning Latinos *55*

Table 3.3. Allocation of Resources, by Percentage Appropriated per Period *56*

Table 3.4. Suggested Source of Revenue for Specific Policy Areas *56*

Table 3.5. Decision-Making Domain for Each Policy Area *58*

Table 3.6. Importance of Policy Issues in Education *59*

Table 3.7. Importance of Policy Issues in Education, by Type of Program *60*

Table 3.8. Opinion on Select Issues in Public Education *61*

Table 3.9. Importance of Policy Issues in Employment, by Type of Program *62*

Table 3.10. Importance of Policy Issues in Economic Development *63*

Table 3.11. Importance of Policy Issues in Health, by Type of Program *64*

Table 3.12. Importance of Policy Issues in Housing *65*

Table 3.13. Importance of Policy Issues in Amnesty and Naturalization *66*

Table 3.14. Position on Immigration and Citizenship Issues *67*

Table 3.15. Importance of Policy Issues in Day Care, by Target Group *67*

Table 3.16. Importance of Policy Issues in Food and Nutrition, by Type of Program *68*

Table 3.17. Importance of Policy Issues in Latino Arts and Culture *69*

Table 3.18. Importance of Policy Issues in Legal Services, by Type of Program *70*

Table 3.19. Importance of Policy Issues in Income Maintenance and Welfare *70*

Table 3.20. Importance of Policy Issues in Transportation *71*

Table 3.21. Strategies for Increasing Latino Political Representation in Los Angeles County, by Type of Activity *72*

Table 3.22. Rating the Responsiveness of Various Levels of Government, by Leaders' Place of Residence *72*

Table 3.23. Rating Public Services, by Latino Leaders and the Community *73*

Table 3.24. Importance and Frequency of Working with Leaders of Other Ethnic Groups *74*

Table 3.25. Perception of Anglo Treatment of Specific Racial or Ethnic Groups, by Latino Leaders and the Community *74*

Table 3.26. Opinions Regarding Race Relations *75*

Table 3.27. Media Treatment of Latino Issues in Los Angeles County *75*

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER 1

Figure 1.1. Population Growth in Los Angeles County, by Race or Ethnicity, 1920-2000 *3*

Figure 1.2. Age Distribution in Los Angeles County, by Race or Ethnicity, 1985 *4*

Figure 1.3. Student Enrollment in Los Angeles County Public Schools, by Race or Ethnicity, 1977-78 to 1986-87 *5*

Figure 1.4. Total and Spanish-Speaking Limited English Proficient Students in Los Angeles County Public Schools, 1980-87 *6*

Figure 1.5. High School Graduates and Median Years of School Completed by Persons 25 Years and Older in Los Angeles County, by Race or Ethnicity, 1980 *7*

Figure 1.6. High School Graduates and First-Time Freshmen in Los Angeles County, by Educational System and Race or Ethnicity, 1986 *8*

Figure 1.7. Educational Attainment of Persons 25 Years and Older in Los Angeles County, by Race or Ethnicity, 1980 *9*

Figure 1.8. Foreign-Born and U.S.-Born Civilian Labor Force in Los Angeles County, by Race or Ethnicity, 1980 *10*

Figure 1.9. National Origin of Foreign-Born and U.S.-Born Latinos in the Civilian Labor Force in Los Angeles County, 1980 *11*

Figure 1.10. Occupations of Persons 16 Years and Older Employed in Los Angeles County, by Race or Ethnicity, 1980 *11*

Figure 1.11. Projected Demand for Workers in Southern California, by Occupation and Industry, 1980-90 *12*

Figure 1.12. Unemployment of Foreign-Born and U.S.-Born Persons in Los Angeles County, by Race or Ethnicity, 1980 *13*

Figure 1.13. Unemployment of Foreign-Born and U.S.-Born Latinos in Los Angeles County, by National Origin, 1980 *13*

Figure 1.14. Median Income in Los Angeles County, by Family, Gender, and Race or Ethnicity, 1980 *14*

Figure 1.15. Owners and Renters in Los Angeles County, by Race or Ethnicity, 1980 *15*

Figure 1.16. Percentage of Families Living in Poverty and Average Family Size in Los Angeles County, by Race or Ethnicity, 1980 *15*

STUDY SUMMARY

As a community, Latinos affect every facet of life in Los Angeles County and, in the years to come, their impact will grow. By 2010, Latinos are expected to make up more than 40 percent of the total population. Consider other equally significant data:

- Latinos in Los Angeles County command a purchasing power of almost $22 billion.
- Latino children make up 45 percent of all Los Angeles County public school students, 60 percent of all students in grades K-4, and 80 percent of the limited English proficient population.
- By the year 2000, more than half of the Los Angeles County work force will be minority, the largest group being Latino.

Paralleling these developments within the Latino community is Los Angeles County's growth as a region and as a national and international economic and cultural center. Consider the following:

- California is the world's sixth largest "nation" in terms of GNP.
- In 1987, greater metropolitan Los Angeles produced $250 billion worth of goods and services, making this region the eleventh largest "nation" in terms of GNP.
- The Los Angeles County population is currently 8.9 million and is expected to be 11.2 million by 2010.

These trends would seem to indicate that Latinos are poised to realize a bright and hopeful future. The truth is, however, that Los Angeles Latinos face formidable challenges that must be addressed now. The 1980 Census revealed the following challenges facing the Latino community:

- Almost 60 percent of Latinos in Los Angeles County have less than a high school education.
- Almost one in five Latino families (18.2 percent) are at or below the poverty level compared with one in fourteen Anglo families (7.2 percent).
- Latinos own proportionately fewer homes than any other racial or ethnic group.
- 86 percent of the Latino labor force are wage and salary earners; only 9.4 percent are in managerial and professional positions compared with 28.0 percent for Anglos, 28.5 percent for Asians, and 18.1 percent for Blacks.

The greatest challenge facing those who seek to help Los Angeles County Latinos is setting priorities . . . deciding where to focus limited resources for maximum effectiveness.

Leaders in government, business, and the charitable sectors must decide which of many pressing problems should be addressed. Education? Housing? Crime? Health? In what order? Upon what criteria will such decisions be based?

Since 1987, a major study has been under way that is driven by the unique yet entirely logical premise that it is Latinos themselves who should be consulted regarding the prioritization of needs in the Latino community.

The Los Angeles County Latino Assessment Study (LACLAS) is an unprecedented community-based effort. ***One Voice, One Future*** is the LACLAS study's consensus report on priorities, programs, and strategies for meeting the needs of the Latino community. Conducted under the auspices of The Tomás Rivera Center and funded by the Ford Foundation, the ARCO Foundation, and the James Irvine Foundation, the study takes a giant step beyond merely cataloging the problems facing Los Angeles Latinos. The LACLAS study offers a menu of recommendations that public and private providers of assistance can use to meet most effectively the challenges and opportunities Latinos will face in this and the next century.

One Voice, One Future is more than mere theory. It is an agenda for action and an expression of hope from Latinos in Los Angeles County.

METHODOLOGY

Nearly as significant as the findings of the LACLAS study is the methodology by which it was conducted. In a carefully conceived four-part process, the study began with an overview of Latino demographics and progressed to a broad survey of Los Angeles County Latinos, then to a survey of Latino leaders, and, finally, to focus groups for an in-depth examination of issues identified in the first three steps. Each of these components served as a backdrop for the one that followed, creating a cohesive progression of informed thought.

Demographic Review

The review of existing demographic data on Los Angeles County Latinos included an examination of areas such as population trends and projections, income and occupational characteristics, and educational status. The demographic review made important connections between indicators such as demand for skilled labor and the percentage of Latinos finishing high

school and college. The LACLAS study examined the ethnic profile of Los Angeles public school students and offered insights into the implications of demographic change in the region.

Community Survey

Between January and March 1988, a telephone survey was conducted of Los Angeles County Latinos seeking their views on the most important problems facing their families, on discrimination and political access, on employment opportunities and education, on the effectiveness of government and health and social services, and on housing and recreational opportunities.

Latinos and, for comparative purposes, Anglos were interviewed using questionnaires designed by experts with extensive experience in similar surveys.[1] This second component of the LACLAS study provided a data base upon which the next two phases were built. A profile of the community survey respondents shows the following.

- The average age is thirty-four years (compared with a forty-two year average for the Anglo respondents).
- 57 percent are married.
- Almost 60 percent prefer being interviewed in Spanish.
- 55 percent are not U.S. citizens.
- Almost 55 percent make less than $20,000 per year.

Leadership Survey

A mail survey was conducted in April and May 1988 among Latinos and others who are generally recognized as leaders in advocacy organizations, media, elected offices, corporate businesses, small businesses, labor unions, the legal profession, higher education, women's issues, professional organizations, youth service organizations, law enforcement, and other areas.[2]

Leaders were defined as persons who influence the Latino community of Los Angeles County. These individuals were identified through a nominations process that built on a core group of persons identified as leaders. Each respondent was asked questions concerning the most important problems facing Latinos today, the quality of public services provided to Latinos, and his or her views on issues such as education, employment, economic development, health, housing, immigration, and others. A profile of the leadership survey respondents shows the following.

---

1 493 Latinos and 200 Anglos sixteen years of age and older were randomly selected to participate in the community survey.

2 A sample of 360 leaders was identified; 242 persons responded to the leadership survey.

- The mean age is forty-three years.
- About 60 percent are male.
- About 70 percent are Democrats.
- About 90 percent hold either a college degree, a graduate degree, or an advanced degree.
- About 95 percent are U.S. citizens.
- Half earn $70,000 per year or more.

Focus Group Meetings

A cross section of Latino leaders representing various sectors of the community participated in the focus groups, which were conducted in three phases in July and August 1988.[3]

In Phase I, issue areas were prioritized and defined. Participants were asked to reach consensus on:

- the issue areas that should be considered for funding;
- the order in which these areas should be addressed;
- how each of the funding priorities should be defined; and
- how discrepancies between the priorities of the leaders and those of the community should be reconciled.

In Phase II, primary funding priorities were determined. Participants were given listings of the priorities set in Phase I and asked to comment on:

- the areas in which the Latino community could make the most headway by the year 2000;
- the conditions that lend themselves to progress in each of these areas; and
- the types of programs and strategies needed in the next ten to twenty years to realize progress in these areas.

In Phase III, additional funding priorities were addressed. Participants were asked to discuss:

- the actions needed to give these areas the level of attention commensurate with their importance; and
- the conditions that deter as opposed to the strategies that advance progress in these areas.

The focus group process provided a rich source of expertise and insights that elaborated on and substantiated the findings of the leadership and community surveys.

3 Fifty-nine leaders participated in eight focus groups.

PRIMARY FUNDING PRIORITIES

The broad objective of the LACLAS study was to obtain information to assist governmental and philanthropic agencies as well as the business sector in funding programs that benefit Latinos.

As the study evolved, an overriding theme emerged. Of the many needs identified, the Latino community feels that the problems faced by ***women and children*** warrant special attention. That is not to imply that the entire community is not in need. Rather, the acute vulnerability and the historical neglect of women and children assure that even minimal attention to their needs will reap positive dividends for the entire community.

The study also recognizes that not all the solutions to the community's problems can be effected exclusively through the funding of programs. Government, for example, could do more by viewing public service recipients as active participants in the decision-making process and not just as passive beneficiaries. More attention needs to be given to the goal of empowering individuals and organizations in the Latino community. This process can be facilitated through creative partnerships between the community and public, private, and philanthropic sectors.

To establish a funding agenda and related strategies for meeting the needs of Los Angeles County Latinos, the LACLAS study identified four primary funding priorities and six additional ones. The demographic review, community and leadership surveys, and focus groups identified the following primary issues that require a comprehensive funding effort to achieve the most significant results.

- Political participation
- Education
- Economic development
- Leadership development

These funding priorities are discussed in detail in the following pages. Additional priorities are also discussed as listed here:

- Health
- Social services
- Immigration
- Legal services
- Crime
- Housing

Political Participation

The well-being of a community is related to the involvement of its members in its institutions. Involvement in the community's political processes and institutions engenders a sense of ownership. Through political participation individuals also develop a vested interest in the betterment of their society.

Access to participation in the political process remains a critical issue for Latinos in Los Angeles County. Sheer numbers indicate the community's potential political strength. For example, the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1987 (IRCA) has created the potential for a new voter pool of two million immigrants eligible to vote in 1994. Furthermore, the Latino population in Los Angeles County is expected to increase substantially by the year 2000, adding significantly to the voter pool of the County.

It is evident that the mobilization and self-determination of Latinos through the political process will have far-reaching effects on potential Latino civic participation. To strengthen the community's political participation, programs that focus on education and on building a financial base of support for political candidates must be instituted.

The LACLAS study identified the following program recommendations.

Conduct education and outreach programs for immigrants promoting naturalization and citizenship as a means of exercising their right to vote.

You can't vote if you aren't a citizen. The political impact of the Latino community will remain inconsequential unless it can be mobilized.

Educate Latinos on the importance and benefits of being a good citizen and having civic pride.

The question "Why should I bother to vote?" must be answered for Latinos. The benefits of participating in the process, such as being able to influence the allocation of public funds and helping to set public priorities, must be demonstrated in direct, relevant terms.

Involve Latinos, particularly third- and fourth-generation Latinos, in the political system in a practical, nuts-and-bolts way.

Third-generation Latinos may understand generally how the system works, but they may not know how to get involved. The process must be demystified so that ordinary citizens see a role for themselves.

The LACLAS study also identified the following strategic recommendations in the area of political participation.

Promote the development of simpler voting registration procedures.

Even well-educated people dislike filling out forms. Newly arrived immigrants are even more distrustful of them. Registration procedures must be made less intimidating and more accessible.

Promote the participation of Latinos in coalitions based on interest and not simply on ethnicity or race.

Latinos need not become involved solely in Latino causes. Issues relating to crime, health, and housing affect all ethnic groups, and Latinos can make their presence felt by participating in the coalitions addressing such issues.

Promote the development of political agendas at the local community level.

No one knows the needs of the community better than the community itself. Latinos must come to understand that government should be from the bottom up, not from the top down.

Develop a fuller and broader Latino political agenda at the City and County levels in order to hold elected officials accountable.

What do Latinos expect from government? Have they forced government to focus on their needs? Latinos must evaluate whether elected officials are delivering on their promises.

Increase the community's interest and success in making its political representatives more accountable to it.

Political clout has been defined as the ability to reward one's friends and punish one's adversaries. Latinos must develop the capability of doing both.

Institute mechanisms to increase access to current elected and appointed officials.

You can't influence politicians if you can't reach them. The Latino community must develop ways of presenting its needs and concerns to policymakers.

Increase the number of Latino-backed Political Action Committees (PACs) and other interest groups, including those that contribute monetarily to political campaigns.

In politics, money talks. The ability to support financially the campaigns of elected officials is crucial to the development of political clout.

Increase the representation of Latinos in the media, which play an important role in promoting civic participation.

Public officials respect few things as much as they do the power of the media. Latino journalists can play a vital role in applying political pressure and in educating the community about the importance of political participation.

Education

Latinos represent the largest minority group in Los Angeles public school enrollment. Yet, census data show that almost 60 percent of Latinos in Los Angeles County have less than a high school education. This is of great concern to the Latino community in view of the increasing complexity of American society and its need for a highly educated work force.

Latino concerns center around three major areas: (1) reducing the high school dropout rate, (2) increasing the number of Latinos pursuing higher education, and (3) addressing the educational needs of immigrants and single-parent families.

It is important that the following programmatic needs be addressed.

Increase the number of preschool and early education programs for Latino children, with a special focus on the development of problem-solving skills.

Education that involves the development of critical thinking skills is frequently lacking in the first years of schooling. We must teach young children skills that will enable them to adapt to the constant change that American society is experiencing.

Increase the number of motivational programs that keep students in school and encourage parents to be more involved in their children's education.

Parents play a central role in their children's education. Parents who take an active interest in their child's work and create a home environment conducive to academic achievement can make the difference between that child's success or failure.

Increase the number of bilingual education and ESL classes taught by certified teachers.

The number of English-limited students continues to rise. We need more bilingual and ESL programs and more certified teachers to conduct them.

Develop high school retention programs that are relevant to Latinos and that include counseling and support systems.

The dropout rate among Latino high school students is dismally high (approximately 50 percent). The reason a Latino drops out may be very different from that of an Anglo. Programs must factor in the cultural differences and provide the support and counseling to assure both achievement and retention.

Develop community college-level programs that provide support services to immigrants and dropouts.

For most Latinos, community college is the gateway to higher learning. The vocational programs offered by community colleges are especially relevant to immigrants. The community college system must address more aggressively the educational needs of Latinos.

Develop adult education and basic literacy programs tailored to immigrants and returning students.

It is very difficult to make it in America if you can't read. Programs that address the literacy needs of Latinos are imperative.

Increase the number of retention programs at the undergraduate and graduate levels.

While the growing number of Latinos entering college is encouraging, the real question is how many are graduating. The same support systems needed at the high school level are also needed at the college level.

The LACLAS study also identified strategic recommendations with regard to education.

- Increase Latino representation in administrative, faculty, and staff positions.
- Implement curricular reforms at all levels, but particularly at the elementary and secondary levels.
- Improve the quality of teacher training in general and of bilingual teacher preparation in particular.
- Improve recruitment of Latinos into professions where there are current shortages.

- Assess the impact of amnesty and immigration on the educational system.
- Broaden the scope of business initiatives in the field of education to include the very poor.

Economic Development

The United States finds itself in a hotly competitive world market in which the development and maintenance of a strong work force is crucial to survival. Simultaneously and significantly, the Latino work force is increasing as the non-minority work force dwindles. The result? More employment opportunities for Latinos.

This is particularly true in Los Angeles County. Latino growth coincides with the region's growth as a business and financial center. Los Angeles serves as a gateway to the burgeoning Pacific Rim and is fast becoming an economic model for the rest of the United States. By the year 2000, it is projected that Los Angeles will be the second largest metropolitan area in the United States.

Yet, the Latino community is ill-prepared to take full advantage of the opportunities available to it. Under-education, unemployment, poverty, and alienation continue to keep the Latino community from realizing its economic potential. To address this crisis, remedies must focus on (1) economic empowerment, (2) job development, and (3) employment training.

The following program recommendations to advance the economic status of Latinos are forwarded by the LACLAS study.

Develop initiatives that lend financial support to Latino entrepreneurial efforts.

Financing a new business endeavor is difficult. Financial institutions must develop special marketing efforts for soliciting and increasing the number of Latino-owned businesses.

Develop subsidized child care programs for Latino working parents (especially single parents).

The high cost of day care limits the job possibilities of many poor Latinos. A big economic boost could be given to Latinos through affordable and accessible child care systems, particularly at the worksite.

Develop initiatives that not only educate the private sector about the importance of reaching Latinos but also assess how Latinos can best be educated (or trained) to meet the needs of the private sector.

People who have jobs most likely have them because they have a skill an employer needs. We need to match employers' needs with Latino skills.

Develop education and training programs that provide technical knowledge regarding economic development and procurement.

Entrepreneurship requires a technical understanding of legal and economic processes. Without such knowledge, the economic viability of the Latino community will be hindered.

Develop mentorship programs that assist aspiring Latino business professionals.

Most successful professionals can point to one or two people who, somewhere along the way, took them under their wing. Young Latinos who aspire to a profession need such mentors to help them over the unique hurdles they face.

Develop work-study programs that include apprenticeship positions in business and the professions.

Nothing teaches like hands-on experience. If corporate America is serious about helping Latinos, it needs to school Latinos in realistic occupational settings.

The following strategic recommendations were made to advance the economic status of Latinos.

Promote Latino participation on policymaking and resource allocation bodies.

Latinos are rarely represented on policymaking bodies that make the critical decisions that affect their community economically. Latinos also need to become involved in the allocation of funds so that the total community benefits.

Establish long-range economic development plans for local Latino communities.

How many jobs are there in Latino communities, now and in the future? How can we build and support the economies of predominantly Latino communities? These questions must be systematically addressed by policymakers, and Latinos must participate in that process.

Promote easier access for Latino businesses to the investment dollars of lending institutions.

Lending policies should be designed to help, not exclude, Latino business enterprises in need of capital.

Promote more Latino business collaborations.

Latinos doing business with other Latinos could have a tremendously positive impact on Latino economic development.

Promote a greater emphasis on business initiatives that move poor Latinos into the middle class, not simply middle class Latinos into the upper class.

It may be less difficult to help middle class Latinos climb the ladder, but if we don't simultaneously help poor Latinos, an irreversible gap will soon exist between the two groups.

Promote more private and public sector contracting and subcontracting to Latino firms.

Many Latino firms have demonstrated competence in handling public and private contracts. They should be encouraged to compete for such work and be given sufficient technical assistance to obtain these contracts.

Promote efforts to reduce discrimination in the workplace.

Nothing is more destructive of Latino economic advancement than unchallenged workplace discrimination. We may not be able to eliminate prejudice and sexism, but we can certainly make sure the existing antidiscrimination laws are strictly enforced.

Promote a greater responsiveness to the needs of Latinos in the labor movement.

Turning to organized labor unions is often the only recourse Latinos have to ensure job security. Latinos in the labor movement need resources and the support of other agencies concerned with workplace advancement.

Leadership Development

The Latino community in Los Angeles County faces challenges in many areas. But to address fully a Latino agenda for action, existing Latino leadership must be supported and new leadership developed to help realize hopes for the development of the community.

Latino growth in the County goes hand in hand with the need for more Latino leaders in both the public and private sectors. The growing number of Latinos, particularly recent immigrants, provides a rich and ever larger pool from which to draw leaders.

However, the Latino leadership base will not expand unless several needs are addressed. The following program recommendations have been identified.

Create more and broader leadership training and development programs that focus on technical, decision-making, and coalition-building skills.

Leadership skills can be taught. With training, Latinos can develop their skills and apply them to solving the community's problems.

Provide programs addressing the development of negotiating skills that enable Latinos to handle differences of opinion openly and constructively and Latino leaders to obtain support from Anglos.

In the development of public policy, rarely is anything simple. Numerous special interest groups, both within the Latino community and outside, must be brought together for a common purpose. Those who are skilled at negotiation are successful leaders.

Encourage programs that promote bridge-building between old and new guard leadership.

The so-called generation gap is alive and well in the Latino community. Older, more settled Latinos may see things very differently from recent immigrants. Bridges between the old and the new must be built.

ADDITIONAL FUNDING PRIORITIES

Of no less importance than the four funding priorities described above are the six priorities that follow. In the case of these priorities, however, the leaders agreed that advances are contingent on progress in the four priority funding areas. In the meantime, the LACLAS study offers the following solutions to pressing needs in these areas.

Health

Health care in Los Angeles County is becoming more and more expensive because of its for-profit orientation. As the Latino community struggles with poverty and unemployment, so does it suffer from lack of access to adequate health care. Better health care for Latinos requires a multi-pronged, coordinated approach that includes government, the community, the health insurance industry, and medical providers.

The primary recommendation of the LACLAS study is to convene a task force to assess the delivery of health care services to Latinos and to develop a short-term plan for addressing unmet needs. The task force would include health care providers, community activists, consumer advocates, church group members, as well as representatives from the corporate and governmental sectors.

Program priorities of immediate importance are:

- Preventive care programs, including prenatal and postnatal care;
- Education programs that focus on health promotion (for example, diet and self-examination);
- Outreach programs that increase knowledge about available services with special emphasis on the elderly;
- Mental health programs that deal with stress and other issues (for example, drugs and violence); and
- Programs that address the shortage of Latinos in the health professions, particularly those that work with immigrants.

Social Services

Many obstacles hinder the improvement of social services for Latinos in Los Angeles County. These obstacles are closely related to the other needs addressed in this study. Principal among them are the political processes that govern the allocation of public funds for social services, the multi-layered bureaucracy of the public social service system, the lack of private sector funding, and the fact that the focus of social services changes with the times.

Thus, it is recommended that a task force be convened to assess the adequacy of social services for Latinos in Los Angeles County and to develop a plan for addressing unmet needs. The task force would include a broad spectrum of individuals with first-hand knowledge of the deficiencies of the social service system.

Program priorities of immediate importance include:

- Leadership and personal growth and development programs for children and youth;
- More high-quality, subsidized child care programs; and
- Outreach programs that make social services more accessible to vulnerable groups (such as high-risk youth, single mothers, the elderly, Spanish monolinguals).

Immigration

More than 40 percent of all immigrants coming to the United States are from Latin America, and a significantly large percentage of these immigrants look to Los Angeles County as their point of destination. Latino immigrants face unique problems and needs that are so numerous, it would be difficult to address them all in the near future. Too many competing interests (business, government, community) are involved. Division exists within the Latino community regarding immigrant issues. The federal government makes decisions about immigration issues without input from local government. And the nature of the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) itself hampers immigration reform.

Even more challenging is the need to change prevailing social attitudes. The negative image of Latino immigrants as a drain on and burden to society is detrimental to the Latino community. Latino immigrants must not be used as scapegoats for economic and social problems such as unplanned growth, crime, and inadequate housing.

The rights of Latino immigrants must be redefined and those who are naturalized must be mobilized to make use of their newly acquired rights as citizens.

Immediate program priorities include:

- Outreach programs to make immigrants more aware of community services;
- Programs that target disrupted immigrant families;
- Programs for immigrants who are eligible for amnesty; and
- Programs that sensitize agencies working with immigrants.

Legal Services

The American legal system is both a potential blessing and a potential curse for Latinos. Although predicated on protecting the rights of citizens, the legal system often falls short of that goal in the Latino community.

The legal needs of Latinos in Los Angeles County include legal assistance for immigrants; access to community legal aid services; access to civil court representation; assistance with landlord disputes; assistance with discrimination matters; assistance in cases involving victimization by social, health, and legal services; and availability of Spanish language interpreters.

Immediate program priorities include:

- Low-cost community legal services;
- Legal service programs that assist immigrants, especially those not eligible for amnesty; and
- Paralegal training programs aimed at Latinos.

Crime

The incidence of crime and violence is on the rise in all urban communities, and Los Angeles County is no exception. For the Latino community, the problem of crime is interrelated with other problems, making it much more difficult to tackle. To reduce crime effectively, its relationship with economic survival issues and the weakening of the family structure needs to be addressed. Stereotyping of the Latino family contributes to low self-esteem and poor self-image. Efforts to bring together community, family, and church have been piecemeal or nonexistent.

There is a need to look at crime in the Latino community, particularly with respect to gangs and drugs, as a manifestation of the larger problems besetting Latino communities. There is a need to minimize or eliminate crime as a defining characteristic of Latino communities. Two major needs were identified: (1) improving community and police relationships and (2) holding the media (television and the movie industry) more accountable for their glorification of gangs and drugs.

Immediate program priorities include:

- Youth diversion programs;
- Family-focused crime prevention education programs;
- Community-based drug and alcohol abuse prevention programs;
- Education and job training and placement programs designed for young Latino offenders; and
- Media projects that provide positive role models for Latinos.

Housing

Housing issues have been severely neglected due to the pressing nature of other societal problems. Allocation of public resources for affordable housing has been declining even as soaring home prices in Los Angeles County have placed home ownership out of reach for many

Latinos. The fact is that fewer Latinos own their homes compared with any other racial or ethnic group in the County.

To address the housing crisis, several strategies are recommended, including increasing Latino representation on policy-setting groups pertaining to such issues as rent control and promoting public-private partnerships for affordable housing. It is also recommended that special attention be given to the housing needs of undocumented immigrants.

Immediate program priorities include:

- Public and private partnerships including community-based organizations to create affordable housing appropriate for the larger size of Latino families;
- Housing programs for the Latino youth-at-risk and homeless (who typically include entire families);
- Revitalization programs for Latino neighborhoods;
- Educational programs to inform Latinos, particularly single-parent families, about the availability of affordable housing; and
- Mortgage programs to foster first-time home ownership for Latinos.

NEXT STEPS

Through the Los Angeles County Latino Assessment Study, the Latino community and its leadership have identified their most pressing areas of concern -- political participation, education, economic development, leadership development, health, social services, immigration, legal services, crime, and housing.

The issues raised in ***One Voice, One Future*** are not new. The LACLAS study was aimed at those who may not be as familiar with the issues and who are seeking to provide meaningful assistance to the Latino community.

What are the next steps? What are the practical implications of the LACLAS study?

The LACLAS study offers a proactive agenda to assist in the future development of the Latino community. The next step is clearly the *comprehensive involvement* of public and private entities in issue selection and program design and implementation, with particular emphasis on those strategies affecting women and children.

The Tomás Rivera Center and the Community Advisory Council of the LACLAS study urge corporations, foundations, governmental entities, private sector agencies, professional associations, community-based organizations, and others to adopt specific plans of action. These plans should not merely select one area under one heading, but should be comprehensive and

designed to attack the larger problems facing the community. This study recommends issue selection as the first step, followed by program design and implementation.

Issue Selection

1. Select one of the ten funding priorities addressed in the study for comprehensive involvement. Comprehensive involvement means activities that address entire areas of concern, not merely individual issues.
2. Assign staff to make recommendations for the selected priority area based on available resources.
3. Conduct inquiries as necessary.

Program Design

1. Network with other organizations to combine efforts and share experiences so as to maximize results.
2. Establish an advisory board of community experts and leaders.
3. Make efforts to advance the agenda throughout the organization; involve staff from all departments.

Program Implementation

1. Monitor program effectiveness and impact on an ongoing basis.
2. Evaluate and share results of program(s).

Finally, it is critical that the process not stop here, but that other policy areas identified in the study be selected and addressed in the same comprehensive manner. In this way, the challenges and opportunities facing Latinos in this and the next century can be met.

SUMMARY REVIEW OF RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUNDING PRIORITIES

Political Participation

Goal: To increase levels of Latino political involvement

Programs:

- Naturalization and citizenship
- Civic pride
- Practical aspects of the political process

Education

Goal: To increase Latino educational attainment

Programs:

- Preschool and early education
- Parental involvement
- Bilingual education and ESL classes
- High school retention
- Community college intervention
- Adult education and basic literacy
- Higher education retention

Economic Development

Goal: To enable Latinos to take full advantage of Los Angeles County's economic growth

Programs:

- Financing entrepreneurial efforts
- Worksite child care
- Private sector familiarization with Latino labor force needs
- Technical education and training
- Apprenticeship opportunities

Leadership Development

Goal: To enhance Latino leadership capabilities at all levels

Programs:

- Leadership training and development
- Development of negotiating skills
- Bridge-building between old and new guard leadership

Health

Goal: To maximize the Latino community's access to the health care system

Programs:

- Preventive care including prenatal and postnatal care
- Health education
- Outreach regarding available services with emphasis on the elderly
- Mental health
- Recruitment of Latinos to the health professions

Social Services

Goal: To maximize the Latino community's access to social services

Programs:

- Leadership and personal development for children and youth
- High-quality subsidized child care
- Outreach to vulnerable groups

Immigration

Goal: To optimize transition assistance for Latino immigrants

Programs:

- Community services outreach
- Support services for disrupted immigrant families
- Programs for amnesty applicants
- Sensitization of agencies working with immigrants

Legal Services

Goal: To increase legal assistance to Latinos

Programs:

- Low-cost community legal aid services
- Legal services for immigrants
- Paralegal training

Crime

Goal: To achieve a crime-free environment

Programs:

- Youth diversion
- Family-focused crime prevention education
- Community-based drug and alcohol abuse prevention
- Education and job training and placement for young Latino offenders
- Media projects with positive role models

Housing

Goal: To expand the supply of affordable housing for Latinos

Programs:

- Public-private partnerships including community-based organizations to create affordable housing
- Housing for the Latino youth-at-risk and Latino homeless
- Revitalization of Latino neighborhoods
- Education and information dissemination about the availability of affordable housing
- Mortgage programs to foster first-time home ownership for Latinos

CHAPTER 1.
LOS ANGELES COUNTY LATINO COMMUNITY PROFILE
by Angel Sánchez

To initiate the LACLAS study, The Tomás Rivera Center commissioned a selective demographic profile of Los Angeles County. This profile presents data collected by the U.S. Bureau of the Census and California's Department of Health Services, Department of Education, and Postsecondary Education Commission and draws a broad overview of the County. Its purpose is to provide policymakers with information on the size, growth, distribution, and status of Latinos and other racial and ethnic groups in Los Angeles County.

The major findings are as follows:

- California absorbs approximately one-third of all the immigrants to the United States; more than half of California's immigrants live in Los Angeles County.
- Latinos are the largest and fastest growing ethnic group in the County. In 1985 1.6 million Latinos made up almost one-third of Los Angeles County's population.
- Despite high immigration, 70 percent of the County's growth between 1980 and 1988 was due to natural increase. Latinos contributed 70 percent of that natural increase; Whites contributed 0.5 percent.
- Latinos in Los Angeles County are overwhelmingly Mexican origin (80 percent). Of the remaining 20 percent, 2 percent are Puerto Rican, 2 percent are Cuban, and 16 percent are from other Spanish-speaking, principally Central American, countries.
- Latinos are younger than most other groups. By the year 2000, 34 percent of the Latinos and the same percentage of the Blacks in the County will be eighteen years of age or younger. Asians and Whites will be older: 24 percent and 18 percent, respectively, will be eighteen or younger.
- Latinos, the largest ethnic group in the County's schools, made up 45 percent of the public school students in 1986 and 60 percent of the students enrolled in kindergarten through the fourth grade. The overall enrollment of Whites was less than 30 percent in 1986.
- Few Latinos teach in the County's schools: only 9 percent of teachers, compared with 80 percent of the limited English proficient students, were Latinos in 1980.
- Latinos have fewer years of schooling than any other ethnic group in the County: 40 percent of Latinos had graduated from high school in 1980, compared with 69 percent of Blacks, 73 percent of Whites, and 80 percent of Asians. Of the Latino high school graduates, only 40 percent enrolled as first-time freshmen in one of the three major

university systems in the County in 1986. The comparable figures for Blacks, Whites, and Asians were 51, 54, and 67 percent, respectively.

- In 1980, the County's labor force was 25 percent Latino, and 23 percent of its labor force was foreign born, half of them Latinos.
- Unemployment in the County averaged 6 percent in 1980, when 10 percent of Blacks, 8 percent of Latinos, 5 percent of Whites, and 4 percent of Asians were unemployed.
- Latinos worked mostly in low-wage jobs in 1980: only 9 percent of Latino workers held managerial or professional positions, compared with 28 percent of Whites.
- The median income of Latino families reflects their low educational attainment and employment status: $15,531 in 1980, which was slightly higher than that of Black families and significantly less than that of Asians and Whites.
- Latino families are large, and the low family income must support an average of 4.4 persons. The result is a significant number of Latino families living in poverty: 18 percent in 1980, compared with 21 percent of Black, 9 percent of Asian, and 7 percent of White families.

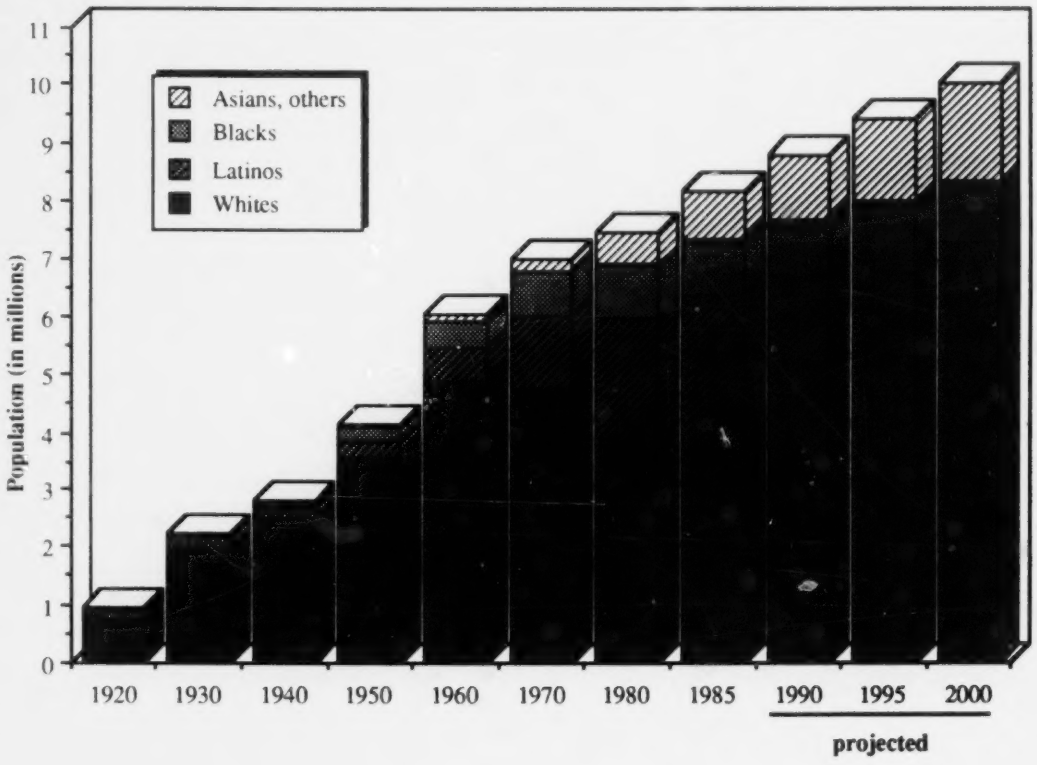
POPULATION GROWTH

Los Angeles County, which comprises numerous cities, is one of the fastest growing areas in California and the United States. In January 1988, 8.4 million persons lived in Los Angeles County, 900,000 more than had been counted in the 1980 census (see figure 1.1 and table 1.1). This rapid growth is projected to continue at least through 1990.

Natural increase (the number of live births minus the number of deaths) accounted for 70 percent of that growth, and Latinos contributed 70 percent of the total natural increase. Whites contributed less than half of 1 percent, Blacks 15 percent, Asians 10 percent, and other groups 4 percent. Los Angeles County's so-called minority populations are growing much faster than its White population, which is barely replenishing itself: Latinos have ten live births for every death, Asians have six, and Blacks have three.

Because their birth rates are high, Latinos are a young population (see figure 1.2): 34 percent will be under the age of eighteen by the year 2000. This figure is actually lower than the 1960 figure of 44 percent. In 2000, 34 percent of Blacks will also be under the age of eighteen compared with 24 percent of Asians and 18 percent of Whites. The ethnic or racial pattern is reversed among the elderly: 19 percent of Whites, 11 percent of Asians, 7 percent of Latinos, and 6 percent of Blacks will be over the age of sixty-five in 2000. Thus the natural increase of minority groups accounts for much of the population growth in Los Angeles County.

Figure 1.1. Population Growth in Los Angeles County, by Race or Ethnicity, 1920-2000



Source: Los Angeles County Department of Health Services, 1987.

Net migration (the difference between the number of persons who enter an area and the number who leave) contributed the remaining 30 percent of the County's population growth from 1980 through 1987. Immigration from other countries is a large part of the net migration in California. During the 1980s, approximately one-third of all the foreigners immigrating to the United States settled in California; of those, a little more than half moved to Los Angeles County.

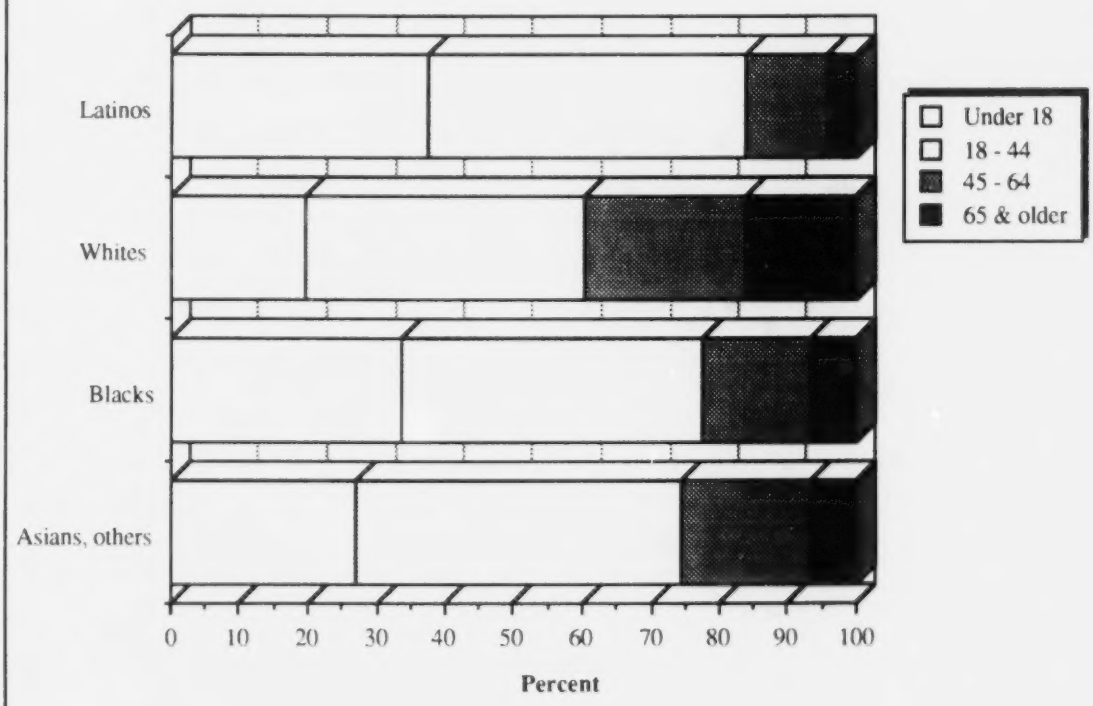
Mirroring trends in California and the United States, immigration to Los Angeles County is made up largely of persons from Latin America and Asia. No longer are immigrants predominantly from Western Europe. In 1986, Europe contributed only 12 percent of the legal immigrants to the United States, while Latin America and Asia each contributed 43 percent. If all immigrants could be counted, Latinos would undoubtedly make up an even larger percentage of the total.

Table 1.1. Population Growth in Los Angeles County, by Race or Ethnicity, 1920-2000

Year	Whites	Latinos	Blacks	Asians and others	Total
1920	752,330	142,177	18,738	23,210	936,455
1930	1,949,882	167,024	46,425	45,161	2,208,000
1940	2,470,022	190,020	75,209	50,392	2,786,000
1950	3,590,330	287,614	217,881	55,862	4,152,000
1960	4,877,150	576,716	461,546	123,359	6,039,000
1970	4,777,904	1,228,595	762,844	262,732	7,032,000
1980	3,953,821	2,015,105	943,879	564,366	7,477,000
1985	3,786,492	2,589,699	964,507	827,845	8,169,000
1990	3,601,444	3,077,454	983,749	1,100,490	8,763,000
1995	3,420,913	3,575,274	1,000,999	1,385,109	9,382,000
2000	3,246,138	4,073,656	1,017,422	1,678,680	10,020,000

Source: Los Angeles County Department of Health Services and Data Processing Department, 1987.

Figure 1.2. Age Distribution in Los Angeles County, by Race or Ethnicity, 1985

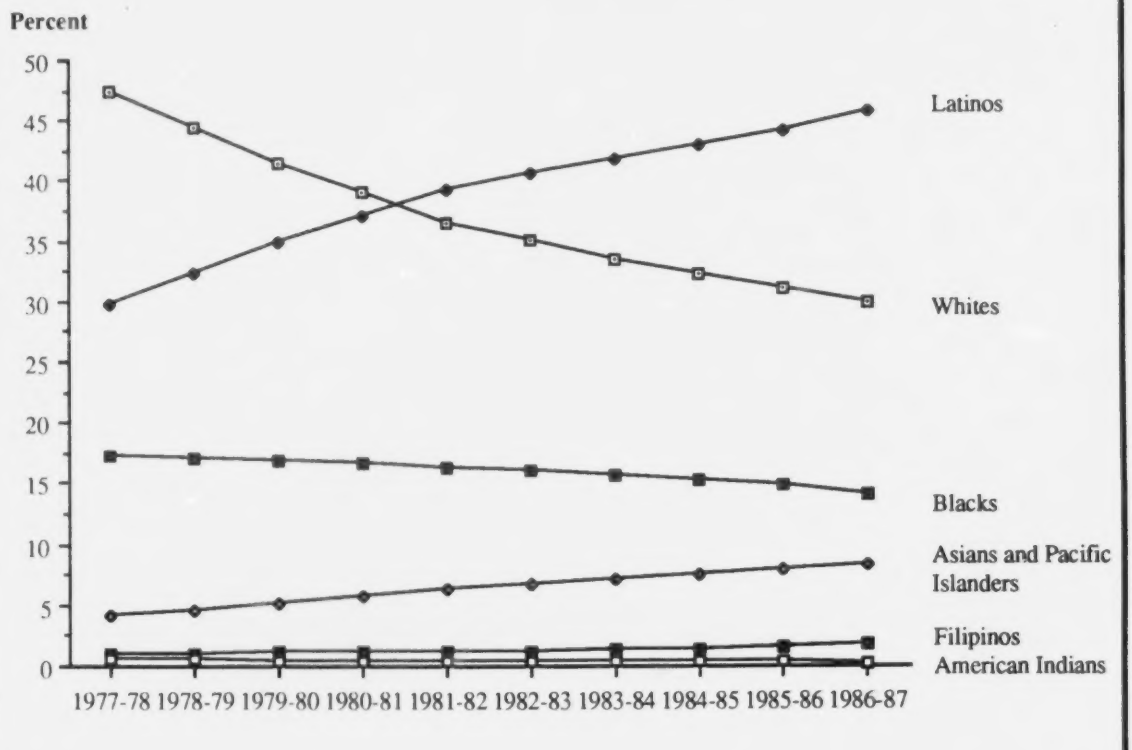


Source: Los Angeles County Department of Health Services, 1987.

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

The impact of these patterns of growth is perhaps most evident in the County's public school system. The racial and ethnic composition of schools in Los Angeles County has changed with that of the population as a whole. The majority of public school students are no longer White, and Latinos are the largest ethnic or racial group. From 1977 through 1986, Latinos grew from 30 to 45 percent of the student population, while Whites declined dramatically from 47 percent to less than 30 percent (see figure 1.3).

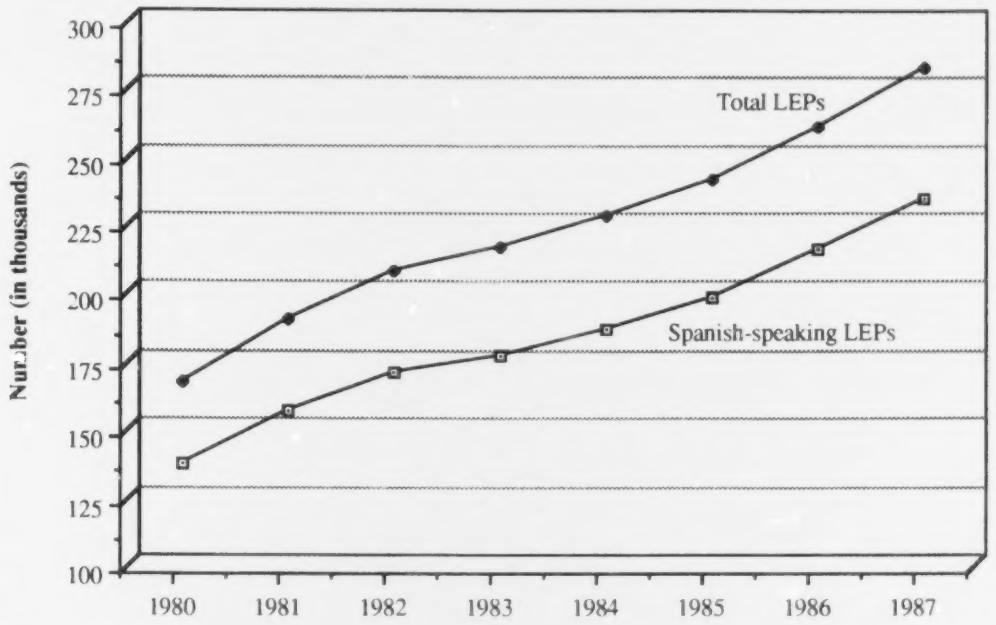
Figure 1.3. Student Enrollment in Los Angeles County Public Schools, by Race or Ethnicity, 1977-78 to 1986-87



Source: California State Department of Education, California Basic Educational Data System (CBEDS), 1977-86.

As the number of minority students grows, so does the number of students with limited English proficiency (LEP). In 1980, 166,933 LEP students were enrolled in public school; in seven years, the number grew 69 percent, reaching 282,500 in 1987. The vast majority (80 percent) of those students were Spanish speakers. In 1987, 234,013 Spanish-speaking LEP students were enrolled in Los Angeles County public schools (see figure 1.4).

Figure 1.4. Total and Spanish-Speaking Limited English Proficient Students in Los Angeles County Public Schools, 1980-87



Source: California State Department of Education, California Basic Educational Data System (CBEDS), 1977-86.

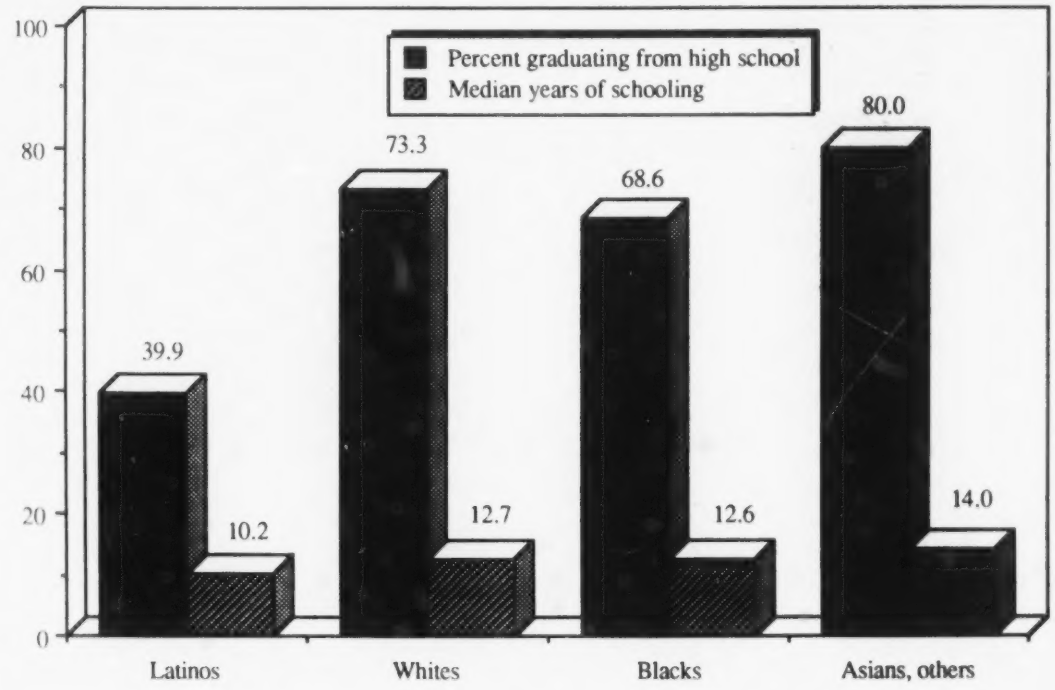
The demographic changes are even more evident in public elementary schools, where in 1980, Latinos made up 60 percent of the enrollment in kindergarten through the fourth grade. Whites made up 15 percent, Blacks 16 percent, and Asians 9 percent.

The teaching staff is not, however, changing with the student body. Of the 55,000 teachers employed by the County in 1986-87, the vast majority (71 percent) were Whites, 13 percent were Blacks, 9 percent Latinos, and 7 percent Asians, Filipinos, and American Indians. Whereas 70 percent of the students were from racial or ethnic minorities, only 29 percent of the teachers were.

Although the number of Latinos in the County's school system is large, few Latinos finish high school and even fewer enter and finish college. In 1980, Latinos averaged 10.2 years of schooling, and their educational attainment was lower than that of any other group (see figure 1.5). Looked at another way, only 40 percent of Latinos at least twenty-five years old had graduated from high school. This figure, although dismal, does reflect an improvement since

1960, when only 30 percent of the Latinos held high school diplomas. All the improvement took place during the 1960s, however, and Latino educational attainment remained virtually unchanged during the 1970s. For comparison, 73, 69, and 80 percent of Whites, Blacks, and Asians, respectively, had earned a high school degree in 1980.

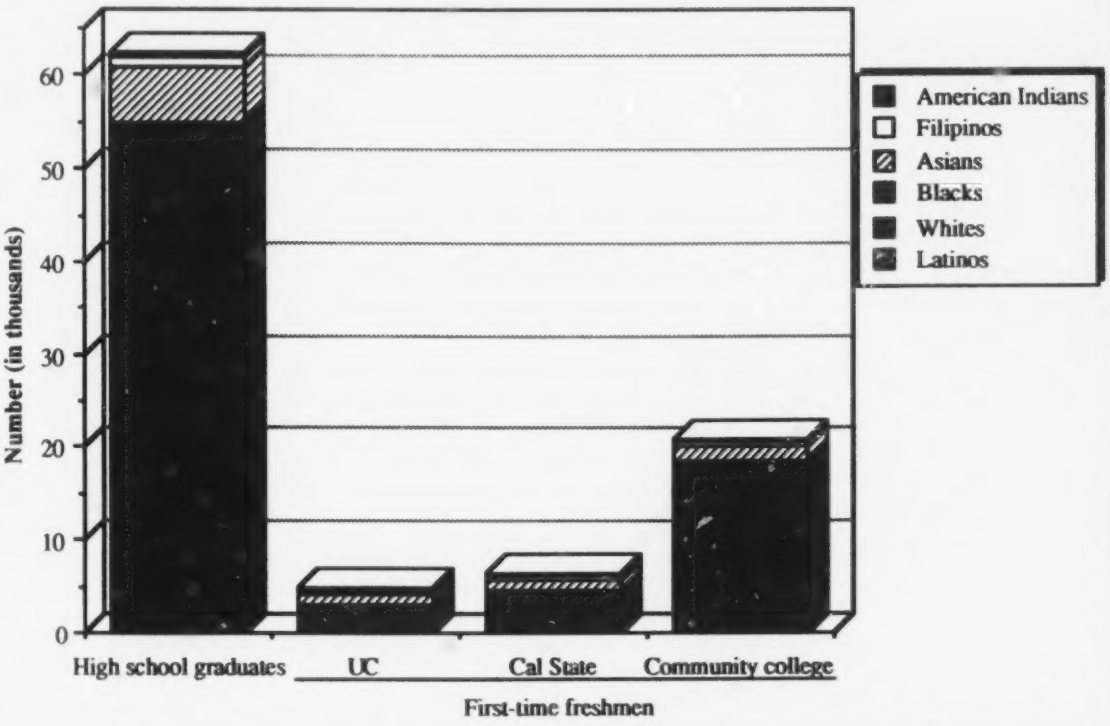
Figure 1.5. High School Graduates and Median Years of School Completed by Persons 25 Years and Older in Los Angeles County, by Race or Ethnicity, 1980



Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census. *General Population Characteristics, 1980.*

Few Latinos attend college, but those who do generally enroll in one of the three California college systems in Los Angeles: the University of California, the California State University, and the Community College. Still these systems absorb relatively few Latino high school graduates: 39 percent compared with 54 percent of White, 51 percent of Black, and 67 percent of Asian graduates. Of the few Latinos who entered college in 1980, most (79 percent) enrolled in two-year community colleges. The same is true of White and Black first-time freshmen (66 and 75 percent, respectively). Asians were the exception (see figure 1.6).

Figure 1.6. High School Graduates and First-Time Freshmen in Los Angeles County, by Educational System and Race or Ethnicity, 1986



Source: California Postsecondary Education Commission, *California College-Going Rates, 1986 Update*. Sacramento, California.

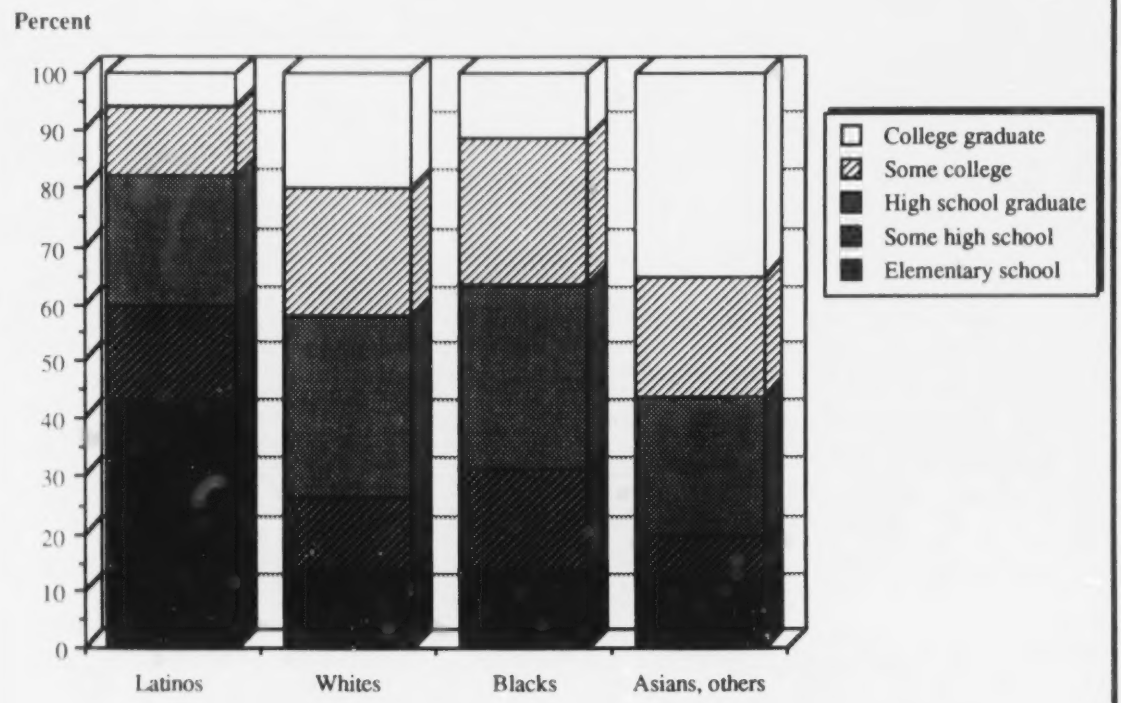
Latinos continue to be filtered out of the educational system even after they enter college. The following figures show the percentage of persons in Los Angeles County who were at least twenty-five years old in 1980 and had completed at least four years of college: 6 percent of Latinos compared with 11 percent of Blacks, 20 percent of Whites, and 35 percent of Asians (see figure 1.7).

EMPLOYMENT

How do these demographic changes affect the labor force? As the County's population as a whole and its student population in particular become increasingly Latino, Black, and Asian, so

does the labor force. In 1980, 42 percent of the labor force (that is, persons sixteen years of age or older) were from minority groups; 25 percent were Latinos. Given this rapid growth, Whites will no longer be the majority of Los Angeles County's work force by the year 2000.

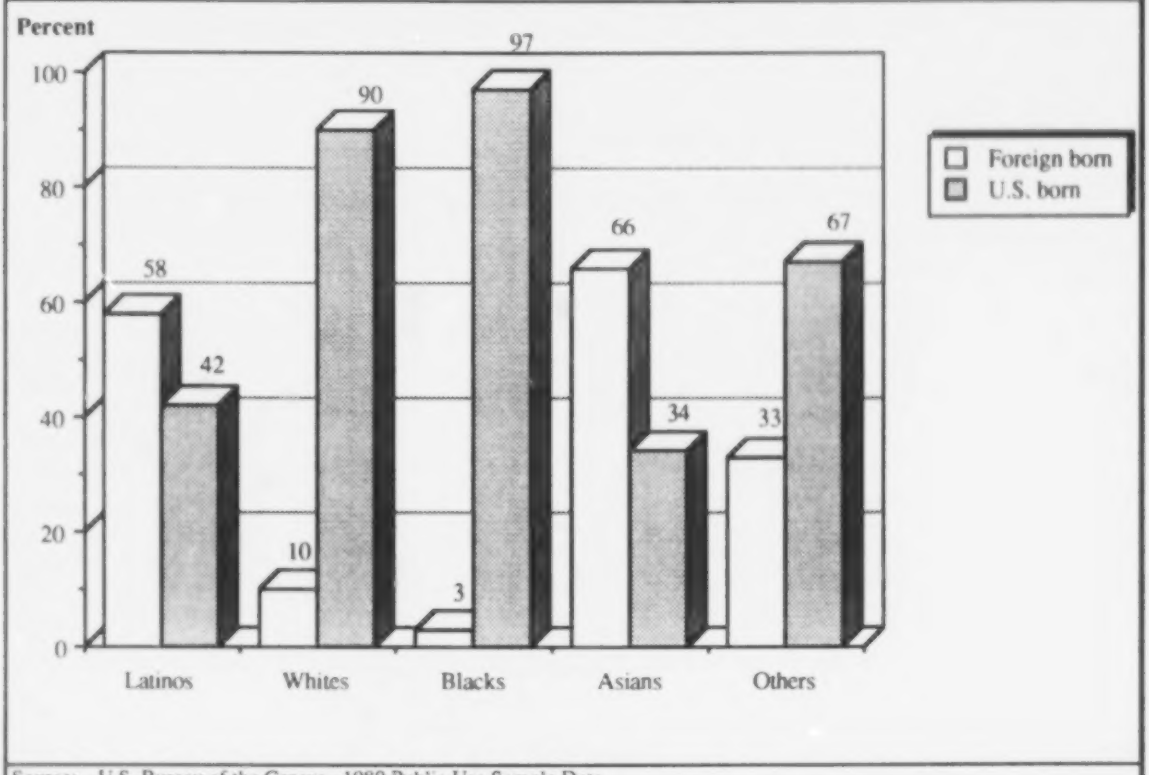
Figure 1.7. Educational Attainment of Persons 25 Years and Older in Los Angeles County, by Race or Ethnicity, 1980



Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census. *General Population Characteristics, 1980.*

Immigrants as well as minorities are becoming increasingly prevalent (see figure 1.8). In 1980, 23 percent of the labor force, over half Latinos, were foreign born. The national origin of the Latino workers in 1980 was as follows: 76 percent were Mexican Americans, 3 percent were Cubans, 2 percent were Puerto Ricans, and 19 percent were Central Americans, South Americans, and other Spanish-origin persons. Many, but not all, were born in foreign countries; and the figures vary greatly by national origin: 55 percent of Mexican Americans were foreign born, compared with 90 percent of Cubans and 70 percent of Central and South Americans. Puerto Ricans are U.S. citizens by birth (see figure 1.9). The 2.4 million Whites were born overwhelmingly in the United States (90 percent).

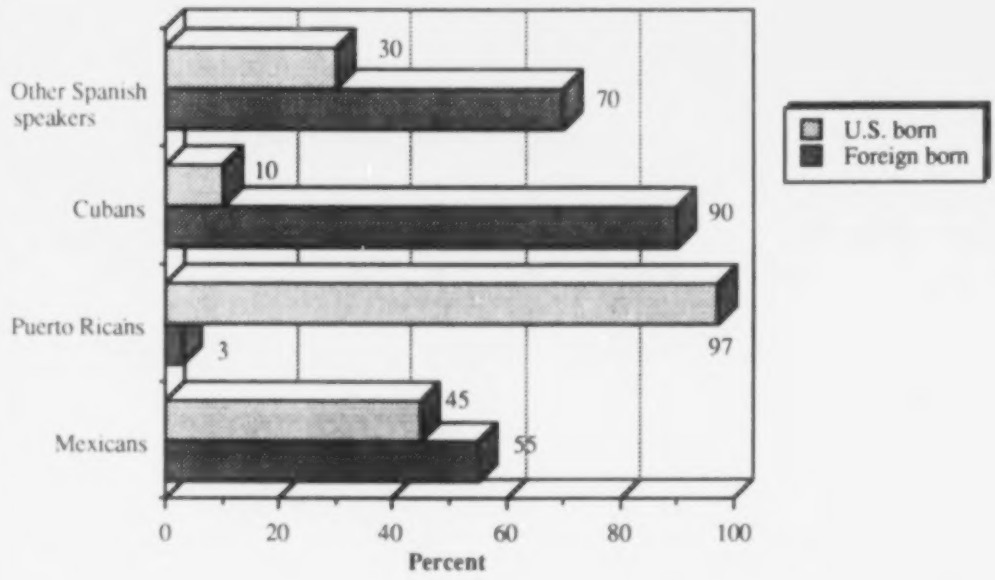
Figure 1.8. Foreign-Born and U.S.-Born Civilian Labor Force in Los Angeles County, by Race or Ethnicity, 1980



Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census. 1980 Public Use Sample Data.

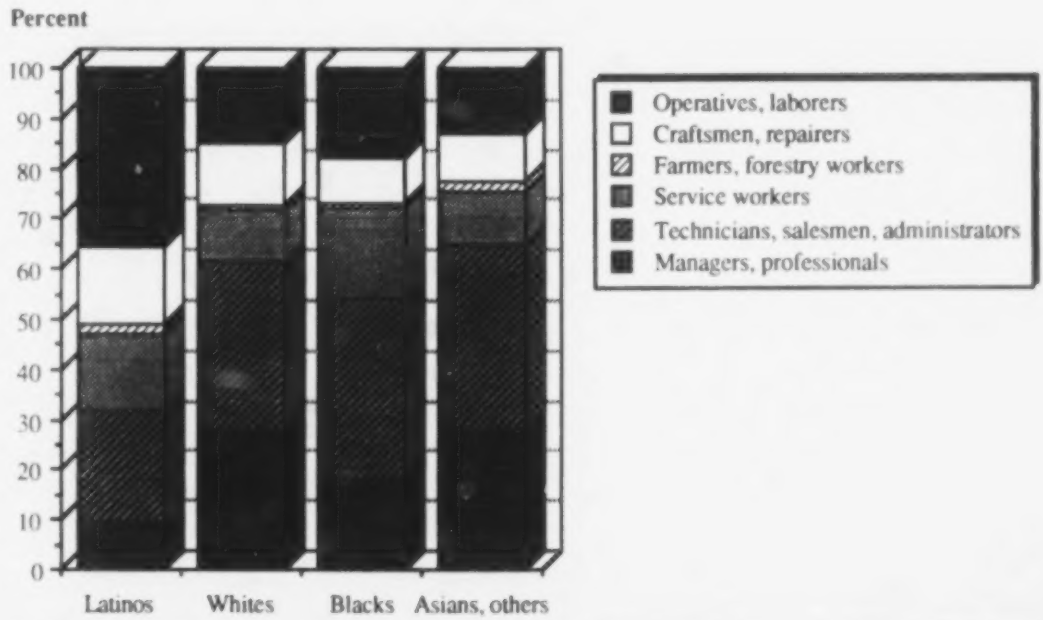
In what occupations do racial and ethnic minorities work in Los Angeles County? In 1980, only 9 percent of Latinos were employed in managerial and professional positions, compared with 18 percent of Blacks, 28 percent of Whites, and 29 percent of Asians (see figure 1.10). The largest portion of Latinos (35 percent) worked as operatives or laborers, followed by 22 percent who held technical, sales, and administrative posts. Approximately 16 percent worked in services, which is the fastest growing industrial sector throughout Southern California (see figure 1.11). Within services, the demand for professional and technical workers is growing faster than the demand for other kinds of workers. Although the fastest growing segment of the work force, Latinos are not employed in the fastest growing occupations or industries.

Figure 1.9. National Origin of Foreign-Born and U.S.-Born Latinos in the Civilian Labor Force in Los Angeles County, 1980



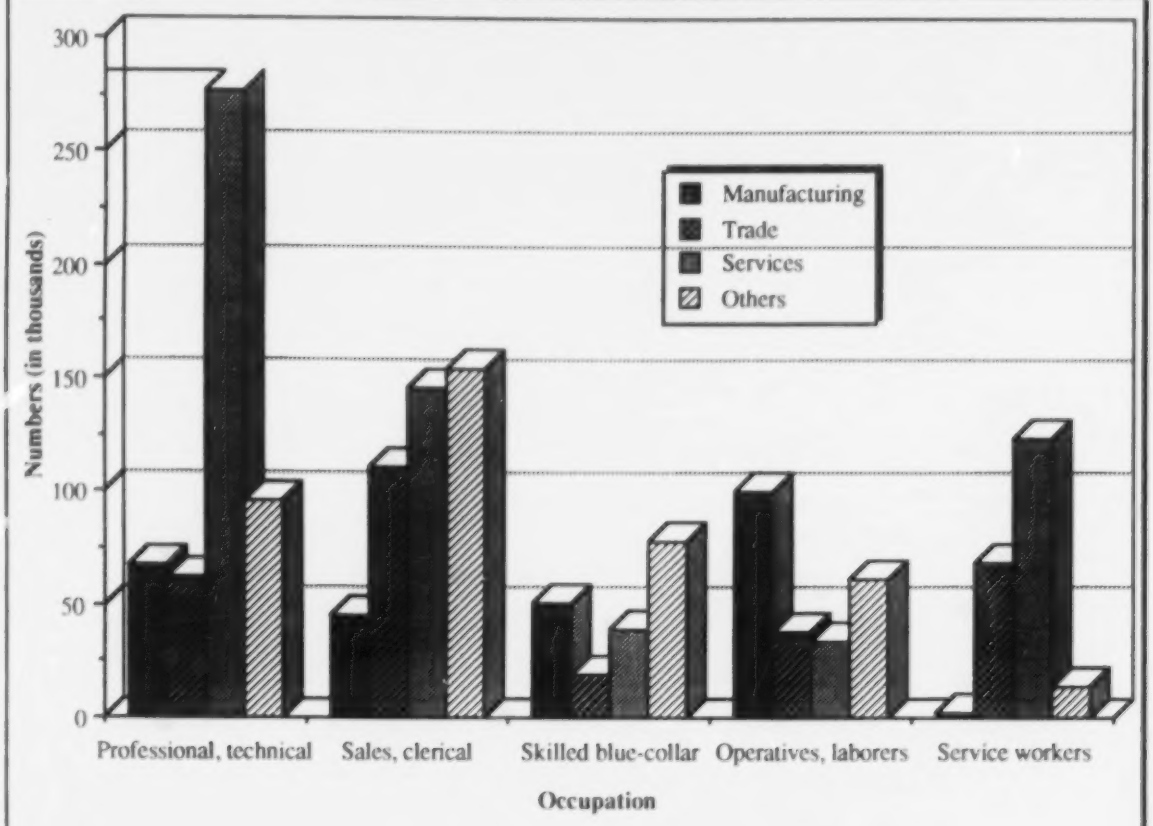
Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census. 1980 Public Use Sample Data.

Figure 1.10. Occupations of Persons 16 Years and Older Employed in Los Angeles County, by Race or Ethnicity, 1980



Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census. *General Population Characteristics, 1980.*

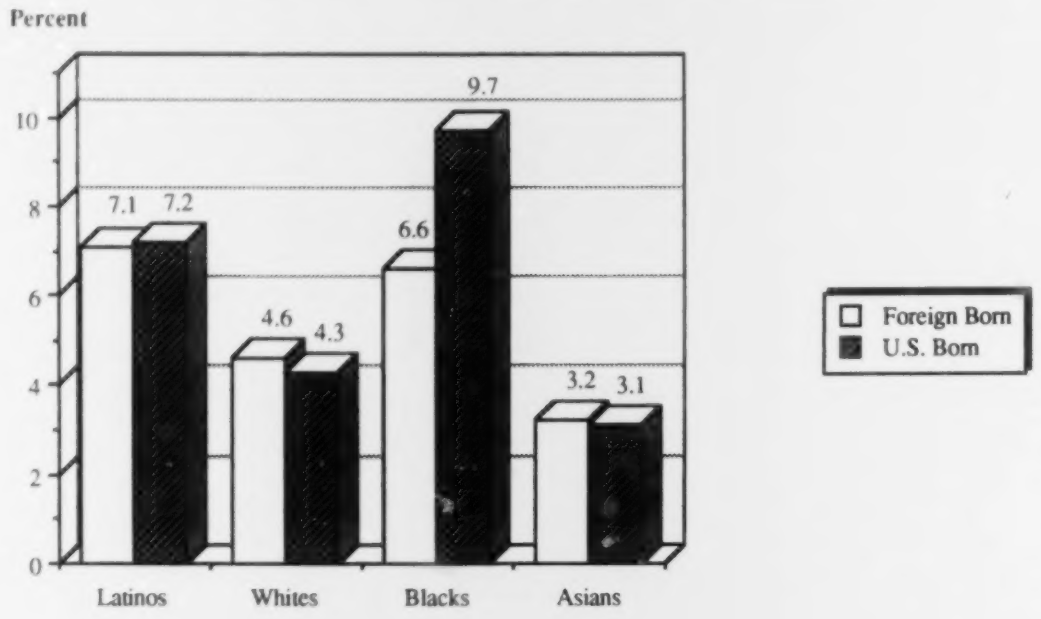
Figure 1.11. Projected Demand for Workers in Southern California, by Occupation and Industry, 1980-90



Source: The Urban Institute, based on projections of the State of California and the Center for Continuing Study of the California Economy and on employment data for 1980-83 from the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

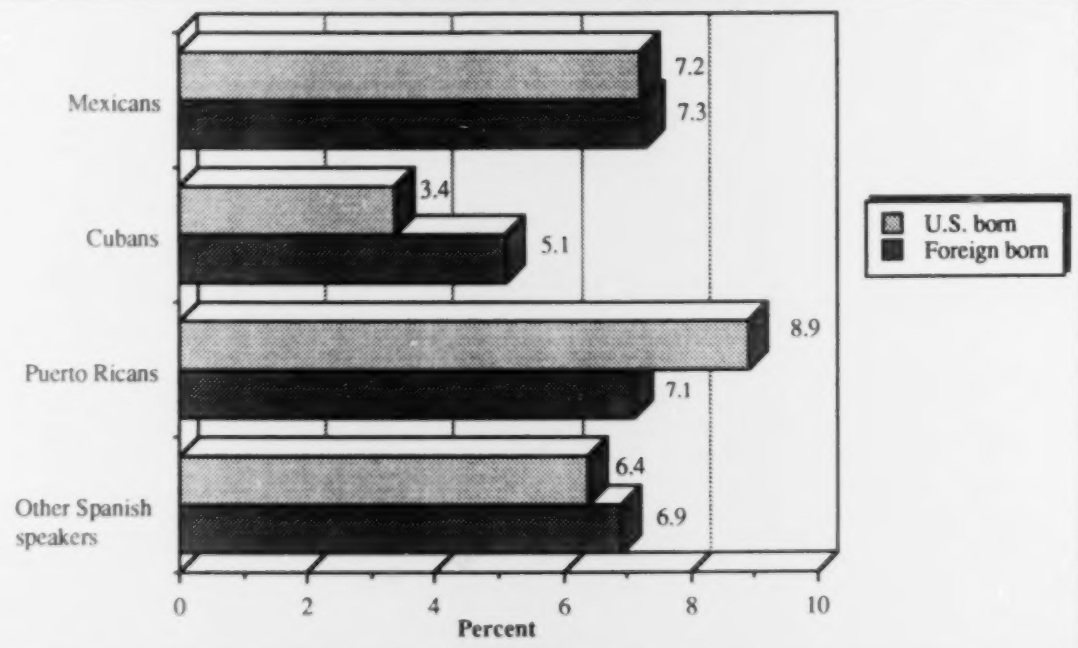
Of course, not everyone in the labor force is employed; in 1980, unemployment in Los Angeles County was 6 percent and varied greatly among racial and ethnic groups and between U.S.- and foreign-born persons (see figure 1.12). Overall, Blacks had the highest rate of unemployment (8.1 percent), followed by Latinos (7.1 percent), Whites (4.4 percent), and Asians (3.1 percent). Among the foreign born, however, Latinos had the highest unemployment rate (which remained virtually unchanged at 7.1 percent), followed by Blacks (whose rate dropped from 9.7 percent for the U.S. born to 6.6 percent for the foreign born). Among Whites and Asians, place of birth affected unemployment only slightly. Additional information for foreign-born and native-born Latinos of various national origins is presented in figure 1.13. Mexican Americans had virtually the same unemployment rate regardless of where they were born. U.S.-born Cubans, however, had a lower rate than Cubans born elsewhere (3.4 and 5.1 percent, respectively).

Figure 1.12. Unemployment of Foreign-Born and U.S.-Born Persons in Los Angeles County, by Race or Ethnicity, 1980



Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census. 1980 Public Use Sample Data.

Figure 1.13. Unemployment of Foreign-Born and U.S.-Born Latinos in Los Angeles County, by National Origin, 1980



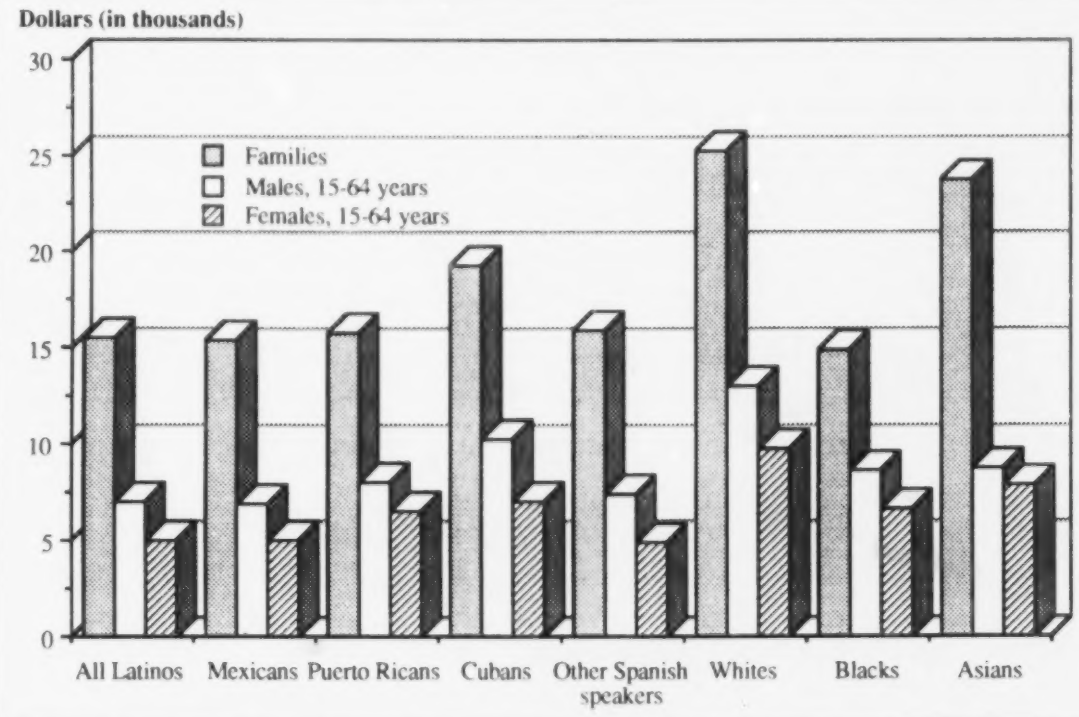
Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census. 1980 Public Use Sample Data.

INCOME

Working in low-level occupations and relatively slow-growth industries and having high rates of unemployment translate into low levels of income. In 1980, Latinos had a median family income of $15,531, which was higher than that of Blacks ($14,913), but lower than that of Whites and Asians ($25,211 and $23,751, respectively; see figure 1.14). Another major economic indicator is home ownership. In 1980, 37 percent of Latinos in the County owned their own home, compared with 39 percent of Blacks, 50 percent of Asians, and 54 percent of Whites (see figure 1.15).

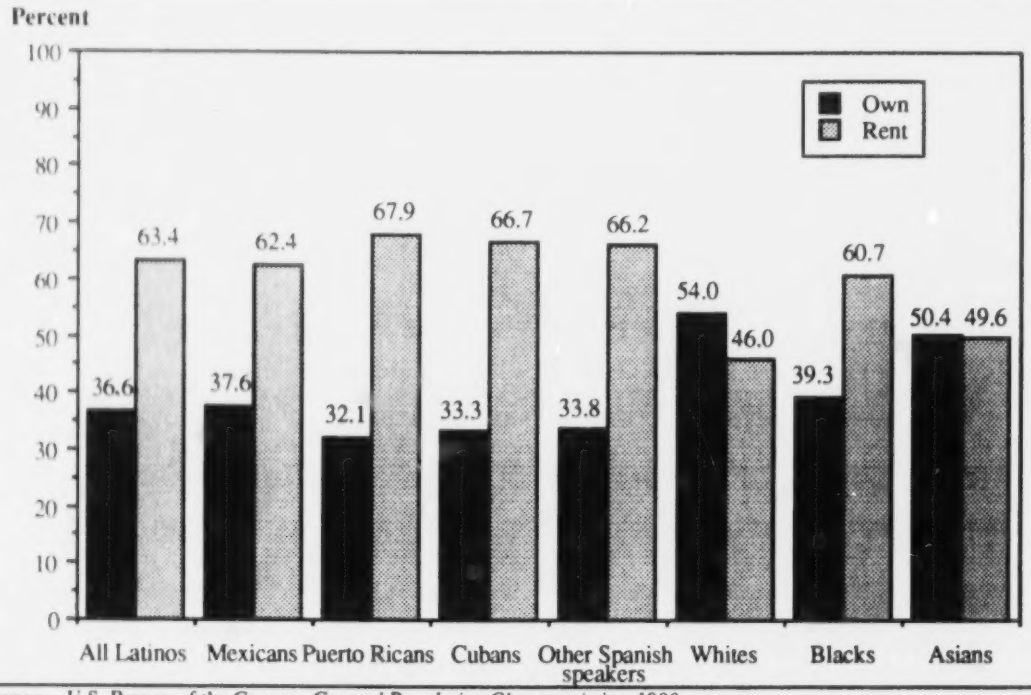
Moreover, Latino families are large, and their income must support an average of 4.4 persons (see figure 1.16). As a result, 18 percent of Latino families were living at or below the poverty level in Los Angeles County in 1980. The comparable figures for Blacks, Asians, and Whites were 21, 10, and 7 percent, respectively. Blacks and Latinos are clearly the most impoverished groups in the County.

Figure 1.14. Median Income in Los Angeles County, by Family, Gender, and Race or Ethnicity, 1980



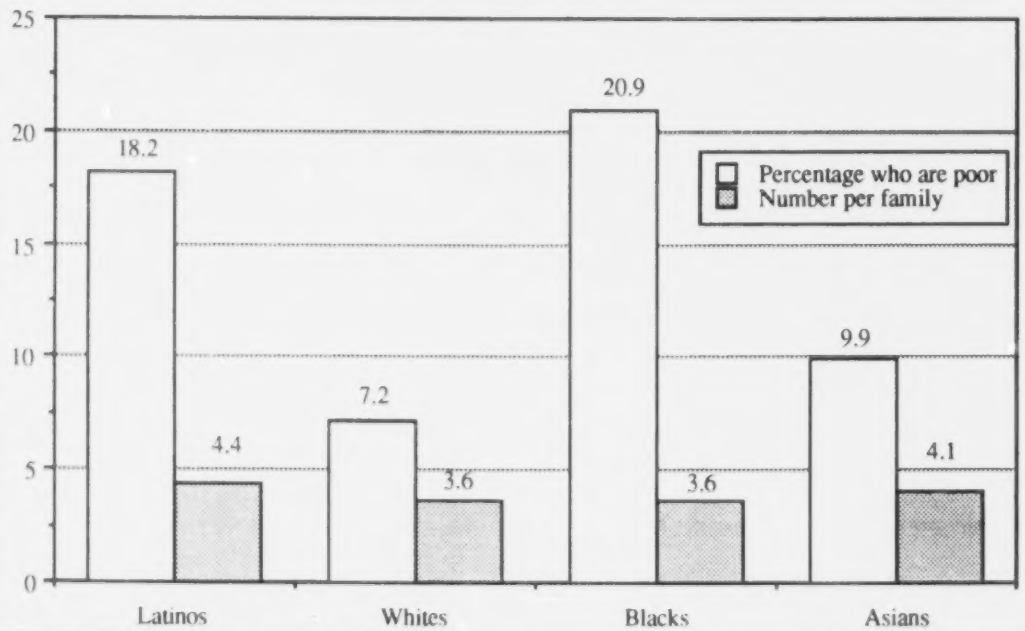
Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census. *General Population Characteristics, 1980.*

Figure 1.15. Owners and Renters in Los Angeles County, by Race or Ethnicity, 1980



Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census. *General Population Characteristics, 1980.*

Figure 1.16. Percentage of Families Living in Poverty and Average Family Size in Los Angeles County, by Race or Ethnicity, 1980



Note: Family size is the average of all families.
Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census. *General Population Characteristics, 1980.*

CONCLUSION

This profile presents a challenging future for Los Angeles County. The occupational structure in the very near future will require workers with higher levels of skills and more education than it does now. Yet the work force will be made up of today's minorities, many of them Latinos, who lack the basic resources and skills to succeed. The conditions just detailed foresee a future in which the work force lacks the schooling, resources, and skills to meet the changing demands of Los Angeles County. The next chapter builds on this portrait of Los Angeles County by presenting the results of the LACLAS study's survey of Latino households.

CHAPTER 2.
LOS ANGELES COUNTY LATINO HOUSEHOLD SURVEY
by Leobardo Estrada and Julie Solis

This chapter presents the results of the community household survey conducted as part of the Los Angeles County Latino Assessment Study (LACLAS). The broad objective of the LACLAS study was to obtain information to assist government and philanthropic agencies, as well as the business sector, in identifying programs of benefit to Latinos in Los Angeles County. The survey presented here, the second component of the LACLAS study, was designed to identify the needs of Latinos and to assess the concerns and opinions of that community.

METHODOLOGY

The survey was conducted by telephone between January and March 1988 using a targeted, multilevel sample based on randomly generated phone numbers. Developed by five scholars from The Tomás Rivera Center, a questionnaire was completed for 493 Latino[1] and 200 Anglo[2] adults living in Los Angeles County (the response rates were 84 and 89 percent, respectively). The sample size provided a 95 percent level of confidence that the margin of error was less than 4.5 percent for Latinos and 7.0 percent for Anglos. The sample size compared favorably with that of other recent community surveys: the 1988 Southern California Social Survey conducted by the University of California at Los Angeles included 171 Latinos in Los Angeles and Orange counties; the Rand Corporation sampled 237 Latinos in its 1988 survey commissioned by LA 2000; and the *Los Angeles Times* in its 1983 series on Southern California's Latino community polled 568 Latinos across the state.

Two significant events may have influenced the opinions expressed during the period of the survey: the deadline for applying for amnesty was nearing its end, and the presidential election primaries were under way. Although factoring out the effect of these events on the study findings is not possible, the issues were covered so broadly in the media that a comparable effect on all respondents is assumed.

BACKGROUND CHARACTERISTICS

The study sample consisted of 493 Latinos and 200 Anglos of work-force age (sixteen years of age or older; see table 2.1). The average age was thirty-four years for Latinos and forty-two for Anglos. The majority of both groups (68 percent of Latinos and 59 percent of Anglos) were

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1 Latino is defined as a person from Mexico, Central America, South America (except Brazil), Cuba, or Puerto Rico.

2 Anglo is defined as a person of Anglo Saxon or other European descent.

women. Most Latinos were married (57 percent), and few (8 percent) were divorced, separated, or widowed. Among Anglos 45 percent were married and 19 percent were divorced, separated, or widowed. The ethnic difference in marital status was underscored by the number of households that had children under eighteen years of age residing at home: Latinos had 124 children per 100 households compared with Anglos, who had 26. Latino children averaged eight years (with two-year-olds comprising the largest group), and Anglo children averaged nine years (with four-year-olds predominating).

Table 2.1. General Background Characteristics
(Percentages unless otherwise indicated)

Characteristic	Latino	Anglo
Sample size	493	200
Gender		
Male	32	41
Female	68	59
Average age	34	42
Marital status		
Married	57	45
Divorced, separated, widowed	8	19
Never married	35	36
Number of children		
Under 18 years of age	618	53
Per 100 households	124	26

The following sections use the information gathered in the LACLAS survey to describe Latinos of work-force age in Los Angeles County. These characteristics are significant because they affect how Latinos perceive the needs of their family and community.

Language Preference

The Latinos surveyed chose the language in which they wished to be interviewed. The majority (59 percent) chose to be interviewed in Spanish, 34 percent in English, and 7 percent had no preference.

Respondents with an expressed language preference were asked to evaluate their own proficiency in the other language (see table 2.2). Almost two-thirds of those who preferred English or had no preference said that they speak Spanish well or very well, while less than one-fourth of those who preferred Spanish felt that they speak English well or very well.

Table 2.2. Language Proficiency, by Language Preference
(Percentages)

Proficiency in second language	Prefers English, proficiency in Spanish	Prefers Spanish, proficiency in English
Very well	34.7	5.8
Well	28.6	16.1
Not very well	26.1	51.6
Not at all	10.6	26.5

Language preference was further analyzed according to educational background (see table 2.3). A significant[3] correlation exists between language preference and the amount of education completed. Not surprisingly, preference for English was highly associated with the amount of education completed: persons with less than an eighth-grade education preferred Spanish, while those with thirteen or more years of education preferred English.

Table 2.3. Language Preference, by Educational Attainment

	Years completed*			
Preferred language	0-8	9-11	12	13+
Spanish	93.6	53.1	43.6	32.1
English	4.8	37.5	46.8	57.2
No preference	1.6	9.4	9.6	10.7

* Percentage in each educational category equals 100 percent.

Birthplace, Self-Identification, and Residency

Almost half of the respondents were born in Mexico, and one-third were born in the United States (see table 2.4). Overall, two-thirds of their parents were foreign born. The Latinos in Los Angeles County came primarily from Mexico, followed by El Salvador, Guatemala, and other countries (that is, Central and South America). Recently, many Central American refugees have settled in the county.

When asked about their citizenship, 55 percent (269 persons) stated that they were not U.S. citizens. When the non-U.S. citizens were asked about their residency status, 70 percent indicated that they were legal residents and 27 percent said they were not (see table 2.5). Calculating the proportion of legal residents is inexact, however, because 36 percent of the respondents declined to state their legal status. Of those who did respond, 84 persons, or 17 percent of the total sample, were residing in the United States without documentation.

[3] The term "significant" as used in this report refers to statistical significance. Statistical significance is determined by testing the statistical results for probability of occurrence. The test is whether a certain finding could occur by chance more than 5 percent of the time. If it could, then the finding would not be considered statistically significant.

Regardless of legal status, most foreign-born Latinos expected to remain permanently in the United States.

Table 2.4. Country of Origin
(Percentages)

Country	Respondent	Father	Mother
Mexico	47.6	60.1	57.9
United States	32.5	18.4	20.8
El Salvador	6.9	6.3	6.5
Guatemala	4.1	4.1	3.5
Cuba	1.9	1.6	1.6
Colombia	1.6	1.4	1.9
Nicaragua	1.0	1.0	1.1
Ecuador	1.0	1.0	1.1
Costa Rica	0.8	1.0	1.1
Chile	0.5	0.5	0.5
Peru	0.5	0.5	0.5
Others	1.6	4.1	3.5

Table 2.5. Residency Status

Status	Number	Percent
Total respondents	491	100.0
Citizenship		
Not U.S.	269	54.8
U.S. by birth	167	34.0
Naturalized U.S.	55	11.2
Residency status of non-U.S. citizens		
Total respondents	311	100.0
Legal	208	66.9
Undocumented	84	27.0
Declined to answer	19	6.1
Future plans of non-U.S. citizens		
Total respondents	279	100.0
Remain permanently	229	82.1
Return to home country	43	15.4
Doesn't know	7	2.5

Note: The total number of responses varies across categories because of differences in the response rates for different questions.

The respondents were asked their opinion of the current legislation granting undocumented immigrants amnesty to work and reside legally in the United States. An overwhelming 87 percent favored the new law. They were also asked why they felt some persons eligible for amnesty did not apply. Their most frequent responses are given in table 2.6.

Table 2.6. Reasons Eligible Persons Do Not Apply for Amnesty

Reason	Percent*
Afraid of the INS	53.3
Afraid won't qualify	27.0
Don't know how to apply	17.2
Can't afford the cost	14.0
Can't prove residency	9.7
Don't want to break up family	6.9
Not interested in citizenship	2.8
Plan to return to home country	2.6
Don't want to give up own citizenship	1.6
Don't know	6.5
Other	16.2

* Total is over 100 percent due to multiple responses.

More than half felt that many did not trust the Immigration and Naturalization Service, 27 percent thought they were afraid of not qualifying, and 17 percent thought they did not understand the process or know how to apply. Others felt that the cost was prohibitive or that the individuals could not prove they had been in the United States continuously. When asked whether they supported the employer sanctions intended to discourage employers from hiring undocumented workers, about two-thirds (64 percent) felt that employers who hire undocumented persons should not be punished. About 26 percent supported employer sanctions.

The respondents were also asked about their ethnic background. When asked to identify their ethnicity, 26 percent identified themselves as Mexican and 17 percent as Mexican American (see table 2.7). With the less than 2 percent who identified themselves as Chicano, 45 percent of the Latinos thus identified themselves specifically as Mexican origin. One-third preferred to use a generic label such as Hispanic (chosen by 18 percent) or Latino (14 percent). Others identified themselves by their country of origin (8 percent), and 7 percent preferred to call themselves simply Americans.

Table 2.7. Ethnic Identification

Ethnicity	Percent
Mexican	26.3
Hispanic	17.9
Mexican American	16.6
Latino	14.3
Nationality (other than Mexican)	7.7
American	7.0
Latin American	3.6
Chicano	1.5
Spanish, Spanish American	1.1
Other	4.0

Latinos continue to identify with their ethnic origins and to support maintaining their cultural identity (see table 2.8). Over 94 percent felt that Latino youth should learn, use, and hear the Spanish language; 89 percent agreed that Latino culture as expressed in art, dance, music, and crafts should be supported; and 86 percent believed that it is important to observe Latino holidays and other traditional celebrations. More than one-third (43 percent) considered marrying a Latino or Latina important. Marrying within the group was the only issue in which significant differences arose according to level of education. Those with the least years of schooling rated intragroup marriage much higher than the other educational groupings. Of all the cultural elements mentioned, Spanish was considered the most valuable and the most important to maintain.

Table 2.8. Importance of Latino Culture, by Level of Education

		Years completed			
Item	Total	0-8	9-11	12	13+
Spanish language	3.60	3.60	3.64	3.58	3.61
Latino culture	3.52	3.46	3.51	3.53	3.62
Latino holidays	3.38	3.41	3.35	3.41	3.34
Marry a Latino/a*	2.50	2.79	2.47	2.33	2.27

* Indicates a significant difference between group ratings.

Note: Scores are based on a 4-point rating scale where 1 signifies *hardly important* and 4 *very important*. The higher the rating, the more important the item.

When asked about their shopping habits, about one-third said that they buy most or all of the time from Latino-owned businesses (see table 2.9). Latinos with low levels of education were more likely to patronize Latino businesses than those with high levels, probably because Latino businesses predominate in their neighborhoods.

Table 2.9. Use of Latino-owned Businesses, by Level of Education

Years completed	Score*
0 to 8	2.88
9 to 11	2.45
12	2.55
13+	2.02
Total	2.53

* Scores are based on a 6-point rating scale where 0 signifies *never* and 5 *all the time*. The higher the rating, the more frequent the use of Latino businesses.

Educational Background

In the sample, respondents averaged 9.88 years of schooling; 51.5 percent had less than a high school education, and only one in five had been to college (see table 2.10). These overall figures mask significant gender differences in educational attainment. On average, men had completed the twelfth grade, and 53 percent had completed high school. The average for Latinas was the tenth grade, and only 44 percent had completed high school.

Table 2.10. Highest Year of Schooling Completed, by Gender
(Percentages)

Year completed	Total	Males	Females
0 to 8 (primary)	34.1	28.5	39.2
9 to 11 (secondary)	17.4	18.6	16.5
12 (high school graduate)	25.6	28.5	23.2
13+ (some college or more)	22.9	24.4	21.1

About half of the Latinos who had completed twelve years or more of schooling held a degree or credential (see table 2.11). The majority (72 percent) had earned a high school diploma or vocational certificate, 11 percent had earned a college degree, and 6 percent had earned an advanced degree. Of the college graduates, the same number of persons had received their degrees from a four-year college as from a two-year or community college.

Table 2.11. Degrees Conferred to Persons Completing 12 or More Years of Schooling

Degree conferred	Number	Percent
High school diploma	205	63.4
Trade, vocational certificate	27	8.3
AA, AS degree	35	10.8
BA, BS degree	37	11.4
MA, MS degree	14	4.3
Doctorate	2	0.6
Professional degree	4	1.2

Note: The numbers do not refer to individual persons because one person can hold more than one degree. Thus the percentages refer to the share of total degrees held.

Table 2.12 reflects the degrees and diplomas the respondents held according to level of education. About 40 percent of all persons who had completed twelve or more years of schooling had a high school diploma. Almost 4 percent of the high school graduates had less

than twelve years of education, which suggests that they received their degree by taking the GED examination.

Table 2.12. Degrees Conferred, by Level of Education
(Percentages)

Degree	Years completed			
	0-8	9-11	12	13+
HS diploma	2.2	1.6	23.2	18.0
AA, AS degree	0.5	1.6	1.4	2.7
Trade, vocational certificate	n.a.	0.2	0.5	4.1
BA, BS degree	n.a.	0.2	0.5	6.8
MA, MS degree	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	2.7
Doctorate	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	0.5
Professional degree	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	0.5

* Total is over 100 percent due to multiple responses.
n.a. Not applicable.

Four out of ten households (44 percent) had children in school (85 percent in public school, 12 percent in private institutions, and 3 percent in both). Only 14 percent of the schoolchildren were bused, and 36 percent attended year-round schools.

The respondents were asked their opinions on educational issues being examined by the educational community and the public; their responses are contained in table 2.13. The overwhelming majority (87 percent) favored bilingual education, and over half (55 percent) supported year-round schooling. Busing, however, was not endorsed: 54 percent opposed busing children to school.

Table 2.13. Opinions on Busing, Year-Round Schooling, and Bilingual Education
(Percentages)

Issue	Favor	Oppose	No opinion
Bilingual education	87.0	11.2	1.8
Year-round schooling	55.4	36.3	8.3
Busing	38.7	53.5	7.8

All respondents, including those without schoolchildren, were asked to assess the quality of public education in Los Angeles County. One-third (35 percent) felt that the County's public schools were *good* or *excellent*, 39 percent rated them *fair*, and 19 percent rated them *poor* or *very poor*. The 7 percent who could not judge might not have had children in public schools.

The respondents' evaluation of the quality of public education was also examined according to language preference (see table 2.14). English speakers were much more critical of public schools than Spanish speakers. One in three English speakers compared with one in eight Spanish speakers rated public education *poor* or *very poor*.

Table 2.14. Assessment of Quality of Education, by Language Preference
(Percentages)

Rating	Prefer Spanish	Prefer English, No preference
Excellent, good	40	32
Fair	48	34
Poor, very poor	12	34

The persons surveyed were asked to explain why so many Latinos drop out of school (see table 2.15). The most frequent response was that *parents don't take enough interest* in their children's education, followed by *teens lack ambition*, *parents don't control their children*, and *teens need to work*. The respondents' own level of education influenced how they explained the dropout problem. Regardless of education, the respondents often blamed the parents or the teens themselves. The most educated Latinos, however, were slightly more likely to blame external factors, such as teachers or the school system itself. Of the entire sample, 7 percent had no opinion.

Table 2.15. Reasons Given for Educational Attrition, by Level of Education
(Percentages)

		Years completed			
Reason	Total	0-8	9-11	12	13+
Parents lack					
interest	20.5	21.6	23.4	12.1	26.2
control	14.7	16.3	15.0	14.2	12.6
education	3.5	1.7	6.6	3.3	3.7
Teens					
lack ambition	15.0	16.3	11.7	16.4	13.8
need to work	13.0	14.7	8.4	18.7	7.5
Teachers don't					
motivate	2.2	0.9	3.3	1.1	5.0
teach	1.7	2.6	0.0	2.2	1.2
Schools are					
impersonal	1.4	0.0	0.0	3.3	2.5
Other	28.0	25.9	31.6	28.7	27.5

Finally, respondents were asked about the racial mix of the schools themselves. Over half (56 percent) stated that their children's schools are racially or ethnically mixed. About one- third (36 percent) attended schools that are mostly Latino, 5 percent attended schools that are predominantly Anglo, and less than 2 percent attended schools that are predominantly Black. Since the overall enrollment in Los Angeles County schools is less than 30 percent Anglo, predominantly Anglo schools are rare.

Employment, Income, Transportation, and Housing

Almost all of the respondents (90 percent) had been employed in the United States at some time. Table 2.16 shows that at the time of the interview, most were working full time (65 percent). The percentage who were working part time was essentially the same as the percentage who were unemployed and looking for work (11 and 10 percent, respectively). Although unemployment was highest among those with the least education (15 percent among persons with eight or fewer years of education), the rates remained moderately high at all levels. Even persons with some college (thirteen or more years of education) had a 6 percent unemployment rate. The Latinos who were working represented the full range of occupations; the largest number, however, worked as skilled craftsmen.

Table 2.16. Employment Status, by Level of Education
(Percentages)

		Years completed			
Status	Total	0-8	9-11	12	13+
Full-time	64.6	58.6	55.7	66.3	74.7
Part-time	11.4	10.8	11.5	12.4	8.4
Keep house	7.6	8.1	13.1	6.7	3.6
Retired	3.5	4.5	3.3	4.5	1.2
Full-time student	1.1	0.9	1.6	0.0	2.4
Disabled	1.1	0.0	1.6	0.0	1.2
Unemployed	10.3	15.3	9.8	10.1	6.0
Other	0.4	1.8	3.4	0.0	2.5

Respondents were also asked about their gross household income in 1987, including all sources. Ranges of income were asked rather than exact amounts in order to encourage individuals to answer the question (see table 2.17). Almost 55 percent made less than $20,000 per year. As expected, income rose significantly as the level of education rose.

Table 2.17. Household Income, by Level of Education
(Percentages)

Income (in thousands)	Total	Years completed			
		0-8	9-11	12	13+
Less than $10	14.0	28.2	18.9	4.8	2.5
$10-$15	24.3	34.0	15.1	25.0	17.3
$15-$20	15.9	19.4	9.4	22.6	8.6
$20-$30	20.2	12.6	30.2	20.2	23.5
$30-$40	12.2	4.8	13.2	16.7	16.0
$40 or more	13.4	1.0	13.2	10.7	32.1

Moreover, respondents were asked the source of their income (see table 2.18). In most households, the primary income was the respondent's own earnings, although both spouses worked in almost half the households (46 percent) and other family members worked in 15 percent. In a small number of households, the respondents received public assistance payments (about 3 percent) or social security (5 percent).

Table 2.18. Source of Income

Source	Percent*
Own earnings	71.8
Spouse's earnings	45.9
Other household member's earnings	15.2
Social security	4.5
Retirement benefits, pension	3.7
Welfare, public assistance	3.0
Unemployment benefits	0.8
Alimony, child support	0.8
Old age supplement	0.6
Food stamps	0.4
Renters, boarders	0.4
Interest, dividends, investments	0.4
Armed Forces allotments	0.2
Other	5.5

* Total is over 100 percent due to multiple responses.

Transportation is a critical consideration in Los Angeles County, and respondents were asked how they get to work (see table 2.19). Three-fourths of the workers employed outside the home drove themselves to work, and another 9 percent rode in someone else's car. Since 89 percent of the Latino households owned a car, it is not surprising that only 12 percent took the bus to work and that 63 percent never or rarely rode the bus (see table 2.20).

Table 2.19. Transportation to Work

Means	Percent
Drives self	74.4
Takes the bus	11.6
Rides in someone else's car	9.2
Walks	2.9
Other	1.9

Table 2.20. Amount of Bus Usage

Usage	Percent
Never or almost never	63.1
Less than once a month	6.3
A few times a month	10.3
A few times a week	7.1
Daily	13.2

Housing is another important economic indicator (see table 2.21). In Los Angeles County, 57 percent of the Latinos resided in single-family homes, and the majority (59 percent) rented rather than owned. The average Latino household, including both renters and owners, paid $677 for housing each month. The majority (55 percent) rated their home or apartment as in *good* or *very good* condition, while less than 8 percent considered their housing to be in *poor* or *very poor* condition. The remaining 37 percent considered its condition *fair*.

Table 2.21. Type of Housing

Type	Percent
Single-family house	57.0
Apartment building (over 4 units)	29.6
Duplex, triplex, or fourplex	6.7
Condominium, townhouse	3.7
Mobile home, trailer	1.8
Other	1.2

COMMUNITY OPINIONS AND ATTITUDES

The Neighborhood

Almost half (46 percent) of the Latinos surveyed in Los Angeles County lived in neighborhoods that are racially or ethnically mixed; 37 percent lived in predominantly Latino neighborhoods, and 17 percent lived in predominantly Anglo neighborhoods. About 18 percent were *not very satisfied* or *not at all satisfied* with their neighborhoods, 40 percent were *somewhat satisfied*, and 42 percent were *very satisfied*. To help determine the source of neighborhood dissatisfaction, the survey asked respondents to rate specific community programs and public services in their neighborhoods (see table 2.22). On a scale of 1 to 5, where 5 represents *very good*, public trash collection received the highest rating, followed by public transportation, street lighting, street cleaning, parks and recreation, and street repair. Latino respondents generally rated services very favorably, particularly trash collection, public transportation, street lighting, and street cleaning. The municipal services that received the lowest ratings were County health services, police protection, and public assistance programs; even these were rated as above average.

Table 2.22. Rating Public Services

Service	Score*
Trash collection	3.89
Public transportation	3.71
Street lighting	3.68
Street cleaning	3.68
Parks and recreation	3.67
Street repair	3.63
County health services	3.53
Police protection	3.52
Welfare, public assistance	3.37

* Scores are based on a 5-point scale where 1 signifies *very poor* and 5 *very good*.

Table 2.23 shows the amount of schooling of respondents who gave a *good* or *very good* rating to specific public services. In general, educational level did not affect how individuals rated public services.

Table 2.23. Percentage Rating Public Services Good or Very Good, by Level of Education

Service	Total	Years completed			
		0-8	9-11	12	13+
Trash collection	75.3	77.6	71.4	74.2	75.9
Public transportation	67.2	70.9	57.9	73.3	61.8
Street lighting	66.6	74.2	59.4	63.4	64.3
Street cleaning	63.3	73.4	55.6	60.6	70.2
Parks and recreation	64.7	65.5	59.0	59.6	73.8
Street repair	63.4	70.5	58.7	59.1	61.4
County health services	60.3	67.0	51.0	66.7	48.1
Police protection	57.4	61.7	50.0	55.4	59.0
Welfare, public assistance	50.2	60.0	43.6	49.1	39.5

Table 2.24 summarizes the percentage of persons who rated public services *good* or *very good*, according to their language preference. Of all the services, only street lighting was viewed much more favorably by Spanish speakers than English speakers. County health services received a higher proportion of positive ratings than public assistance programs regardless of language preference. Welfare services had the highest number of negative ratings overall, although Spanish speakers tended to evaluate these services more highly than English speakers. Spanish speakers are more likely to be foreign-born and, therefore, may be less critical of public services, which are either grossly inadequate or absent in their country of origin.

Table 2.24. Percentage Rating Public Services Good or Very Good, by Language Preference

Service	Prefer Spanish	Prefer English	No preference
Trash collection	78.3	71.3	72.4
Street lighting*	75.3	56.5	56.7
Public transportation	70.4	62.2	72.0
Street cleaning	68.8	62.3	63.3
Street repair	68.5	56.6	63.3
County health services	64.7	55.1	47.1
Parks and recreation	63.3	69.2	66.7
Police protection	59.1	55.0	56.7
Welfare, public assistance	58.2	41.8	42.9

* Indicates a significant difference between response percentages.

The ratings of public services that were given by the Latino sample were compared with those given by the Anglo sample (see table 2.25). Latino and Anglo ratings were virtually

identical in the areas of trash collection, street cleaning, County health services, and police protection. However, marked differences in Latino and Anglo ratings were evident in the remaining service categories. Latinos gave higher ratings than Anglos to public transportation, street lighting, street repair, and public assistance.

Table 2.25. Percentage of Latinos and Anglos Rating Public Services Good or Very Good

Service	Latinos	Anglos
Trash collection	75.3	76.6
Public transportation	67.2	39.7
Street lighting	66.6	55.3
Street cleaning	63.3	65.6
Parks and recreation	64.7	71.1
Street repair	63.4	48.2
County health services	60.3	57.0
Police protection	57.4	61.3
Welfare, public assistance	50.2	34.4

With respect to social services, Latinos disagreed strongly with Anglos about the quality of the County's welfare and public assistance programs. One-half of the Latinos ranked welfare and public assistance services positively compared with one-third of the Anglos. Conversely, one out of six Latinos ranked these services negatively compared with one out of four Anglos . Latinos probably know more about the programs that assist families with dependent children, while Anglos are more likely to know about programs that aid the elderly. The common perception that aid to the elderly is acceptable but that aid to families is not may help explain why Anglos tend to be more critical than Latinos of public assistance programs. A more detailed analysis indicates that Latinos who nad children at home rated welfare services lower than those who did not (25 and 12 percent, respectively, viewed the services negatively). This is probably due to the actual experiences of Latino families with the welfare system.

In the area of parks and recreational services, Latinos were generally less pleased than Anglos. Several factors influence how Latinos rated these services: neighborhood composition, home ownership, and the presence of children in the household (see table 2.26). Latino homeowners living in predominantly Anglo neighborhoods and in households without children were the most likely to rate these services highly. Renters living in predominantly Black neighborhoods and in households with children were the most likely to give low ratings. These findings reflect the economic level of the respondents, which affects the condition of their neighborhood and the uneven quality and maintenance of their neighborhood facilities.

Table 2.26. Rating Parks and Recreational Services, by Select Variables
(Percentages)

Variables	Very good, good	Adequate	Very poor, poor
Neighborhood composition			
Mostly Black	59	19	22
Mostly Latino	58	30	12
Mixed	68	21	11
Mostly Anglo	77	10	13
Home ownership			
Owner	73	18	9
Renter	60	25	15
Children present			
Yes	64	19	17
No	66	25	9

Crime

Crime is another area that affects how satisfied individuals and families are with their neighborhoods. The respondents were asked to compare the seriousness of crime in their neighborhood with that of other neighborhoods in Los Angeles County. The average ratings in table 2.27 show that they felt their neighborhoods are safer than other neighborhoods in the County. No statistically significant differences exist among persons according to amount of education. However, those who had completed eight or fewer years of schooling were the most likely to feel that crime is a serious problem.

Table 2.27. Rating Crime as a Neighborhood Problem, by Level of Education

Years completed	Score*
0 to 8	2.20
9 to 11	2.03
12	2.10
13+	1.99
Total	2.10

* Scores represent a 5-point scale where 1 signifies *much less serious* and 5 *much more serious*. The midpoint (2.5) represents *about as serious*. The higher the rating, the more serious the problem.

The survey also asked Latinos to assess the severity of a number of crime-related problems in their neighborhood. They were asked to indicate if specific crimes were *a big problem*,

somewhat of a problem, or *almost no problem* in their neighborhood (see table 2.28) Drugs, burglaries, and gang activity were considered serious neighborhood crimes. Perceptions of the seriousness of these problems did not differ according to education level. Neither did gender affect the rankings significantly; men and women ranked the seriousness of crimes similarly.

Table 2.28. Rating Types of Neighborhood Crime as a Problem, by Level of Education

		Years completed			
Crimes	Total	0-8	9-11	12	13+
Drugs	1.91	1.82	1.94	2.06	1.87
Burglaries	1.76	1.81	1.74	1.71	1.73
Gang activity	1.63	1.66	1.62	1.64	1.59
Armed robberies	1.40	1.45	1.36	1.36	1.36
Muggings	1.39	1.45	1.37	1.33	1.36
Murders	1.29	1.36	1.30	1.28	1.20

Note: Scores are based on a 3-point rating scale where 1 signifies *almost no problem* and 3 *a big problem*. The midpoint (1.5) represents *somewhat of a problem*. The higher the rating, the greater the problem.

Perceptions of the seriousness of select crimes were also examined according to the income level of the respondents (see table 2.29). Trends were in the expected direction. As their level of income increased, interviewees were less apt to view gang activity, armed robbery, and muggings as *a big problem*. For example, 36 percent of the low-income respondents compared with 10 percent of the high-income respondents viewed gang activity as a major problem. Unlike the lack of relationship between educational level and perceptions about crime, socioeconomic status was associated with concerns about crime.

Table 2.29. Percentage Viewing Select Crimes as a Big Problem, by Income Level

Income (in thousands)	Gang activity	Armed robbery	Muggings
Less than $10	36.3	22.2	20.0
$10-$15	21.2	14.4	14.9
$15-$20	18.3	6.8	8.9
$20-$30	19.2	9.7	10.5
$30-$40	17.4	4.4	8.5
$40 or more	10.0	6.3	4.1

In response to questions about the adequacy of police protection, Latinos were generally less satisfied with police protection than were Anglos. Among both groups, level of education played a role: the persons with the most schooling felt more protected than those with the least (see table 2.30). However, statistically significant differences were not found according to educational level.

Table 2.30. Rating Police Protection, by Level of Education
(Percentages)

Rating	Total	Years completed			
		0-8	9-11	12	13+
Good, very good	57.4	61.6	50.0	55.4	59.0
Adequate	25.9	24.2	25.0	28.3	26.5
Poor, very poor	16.7	14.2	25.0	16.3	14.5

In addition, how persons evaluated police protection was associated with the ethnic composition of their neighborhood (see table 2.31). Latinos living in predominantly Black neighborhoods rated police protection the lowest, while those living in predominantly Anglo neighborhoods ranked it the highest. Those living in predominantly Latino or mixed neighborhoods fell somewhere in between.

Table 2.31. Rating Police Protection, by Neighborhood Composition
(Percentages)

Neighborhood composition	Good, very good	Adequate	Poor, very poor
Mostly Black	39	22	39
Mostly Latino	52	25	23
Mixed	59	26	15
Mostly Anglo	72	23	5

Related to the issue of police protection is the question of police respect. When the respondents were asked if they thought the police show a lack of respect toward Latinos, 44 percent said that they do, 41 percent said that they do not, and 15 percent did not know if they do. Ratings of police protection were significantly related to opinions regarding police respect (see table 2.32). Latinos who felt that the police are disrespectful were more likely to give police protection lower ratings. Conversely, police protection was given higher ratings by Latinos who felt that police are respectful.

Table 2.32. Rating Police Protection, by Evaluation of Police Respect for Latinos
(Percentages)

Evaluation	Good, very good	Adequate	Poor, very poor
Police are disrespectful	46	29	25
Police are respectful	68	21	11

The reasons are not entirely clear, but how Latinos perceived police protection of and respect for Latinos reflected how adequate they viewed municipal services. The respondents' opinions regarding police respect for Latinos were found to be significantly related to how they rated municipal services. Those who felt that police are disrespectful were more likely to give lower ratings to street repair and trash collection than those who held the opposite view. Therefore, Latino attitudes about the police were related to their views about the sensitivity of local government to their needs.

Health and Social Support Structure

Three-fourths of the Latinos rated their health as *good* or *excellent*, with an average rating of 3.01 on a scale of 1 (poor) to 4 (excellent). As shown in table 2.33, health tended to improve as the level of schooling increased. In particular, those with less than a high school education rated their health lower than those with a high school education and above. One-fifth reported being chronically ill and tended to have low levels of education. Only about 60 percent of the respondents had some form of health insurance coverage. Of those who had health insurance, one-fourth had some form of public insurance and three-fourths had private insurance.

Table 2.33. Rating Personal Health, by Level of Education

Years completed	Score*
0 to 8	2.79
9 to 11	2.87
12	3.16
13+	3.29
Total	3.01

* Scores are based on a 4-point rating scale where 1 signifies *poor* health and 4 *excellent* health. The higher the rating, the better the self-rating of health.

Table 2.34 shows access to health resources by level of education. Clearly, the availability of health insurance increased as education increased. The less educated were much less likely to have health insurance than persons with nine or more years of schooling. In contrast, those with less than a high school education were much more likely to use a particular clinic or provider for their health care needs than persons with more education. Having health insurance thus may create more service options.

Given the interrelationship between mental and physical health, the LACLAS community household survey asked respondents whether they turn to their family for help in solving problems related to their physical and mental health or social relations. Respondents were asked to indicate the number of close relatives who are not living in their household, but who are

living in the Los Angeles area. *Close* relatives were persons with whom they feel at ease and discuss private matters and on whom they call for help. Of those who responded (58 percent), about 40 percent said that they have no close relatives in the vicinity. When asked how often they discuss serious problems with friends or family, only one in six said *all the time* (see table 2.35). Education seemed to affect only the extreme responses of *all the time* and *never*; as education increased, these levels of contact decreased.

Table 2.34. Personal Health Resources, by Level of Education
(Percentages)

		Years completed			
Resource	Total	0-8	9-11	12	13+
Have health insurance*	60.8	48.0	57.8	61.7	80.9
Have regular source of care*	38.4	47.2	45.3	35.1	23.8

* Indicates a significant difference between response percentages.

Table 2.35. Percentage Who Discuss Personal Problems with Family, by Level of Education

		Years completed			
Frequency	Total	0-8	9-11	12	13+
All the time	18.2	18.8	20.4	23.5	10.1
Frequently	18.5	16.7	16.7	16.2	24.6
Sometimes	34.7	33.3	35.1	32.4	39.2
Almost never	16.8	14.5	18.5	17.6	17.4
Never	11.8	16.7	9.3	10.3	8.7

When faced with legal matters, the majority of the Latinos, regardless of educational background, said that they consult a private attorney (see table 2.36). Despite the variety of services available, 10 percent did not know where to turn or whom to consult when they need legal help; this figure was much higher at the lowest levels of education. Of the persons who had an eighth-grade education or less, 17 percent did not know where to turn and 6 percent, a larger portion than that of any other educational group, said they use the services of a public defender.

Race Relations

The LACLAS community household survey asked Latinos in Los Angeles County about their perceptions of other racial or ethnic groups and their relationship with them. The respondents were asked how much they agreed with the statement that *generally, there is little conflict between Latinos and Anglos in the United States* (see table 2.37). Fifty-two percent of

the respondents *agreed* or *strongly agreed* that there are few signs of conflict between Latinos and Anglos, another 39 percent felt that interracial conflict is a serious issue, and 9 percent did not know. Generally, the persons with the most education perceived less conflict between Latinos and Anglos than did those with the least. The respondents were also asked how they felt about the statement that *in terms of acceptance and achievement, Latinos have made greater advances than Blacks in the United States*. Again 52 percent concurred with this statement, 37 percent disagreed, and 11 percent did not know. In particular, those with eight or fewer years of schooling felt that Latinos have advanced more than Blacks. Latinos with more schooling, especially those with nine to eleven years of education, were the least likely to perceive Latino advancement this way.

Table 2.36. Use of Legal Resources, by Level of Education
(Percentages)

		Years completed			
Resource	Total*	0-8	9-11	12	13+
Private attorney	58.4	55.4	56.9	60.0	62.1
A friend	7.7	5.8	5.6	12.7	6.3
Legal aid	4.3	2.2	2.8	6.4	6.3
Public defender	3.8	5.8	4.2	3.6	1.0
Employer service	1.9	0.7	2.8	0.0	5.3
A priest	1.4	2.2	1.4	1.8	0.0
Notary, counselor	0.5	0.0	0.0	1.8	0.0
Other	12.0	10.8	16.7	9.1	13.7
Don't know	9.9	17.3	9.7	4.5	5.3

* Totals are over 100 percent due to multiple responses.

Table 2.37. Opinion on Race Relations, by Level of Education

		Years completed			
Issue	Total	0-8	9-11	12	13+
Latino-Anglo conflict	2.42	2.33	2.49	2.42	2.51
Latino-Black advancement*	2.62	2.78	2.44	2.58	2.60

* Indicates a significant difference between ratings.

Note: Scores are based on a 4-point rating scale where 1 signifies *strongly disagree* and 4 *strongly agree* on two opinion statements. The first item refers to lack of conflict between Latinos and Anglos, and the second refers to greater advancement among Latinos than Blacks. The higher the rating, the stronger the agreement.

Respondents were also asked how fairly most Americans treat Blacks, Latinos, and Asians in areas such as job opportunities, housing, education, and availability of services and resources (see table 2.38). In general, Latinos felt that Americans treat Asians the most fairly, followed by Blacks and then Latinos. Although ratings on this item did not vary significantly according to education level, persons with the least education felt Asians are the best treated. Perceptions

about the treatment of Blacks were split down the middle: those with less than a high school education felt Blacks are better treated than those with twelve or more years of schooling. Ratings of how Latinos are treated were more negative among persons with a high school education or more than among those with less schooling.

Table 2.38. Treatment of Racial Groups, by Level of Education

		Years completed			
Group	Total	0-8	9-11	12	13+
Asians	2.90	3.00	2.82	2.85	2.91
Blacks	2.66	2.77	2.75	2.58	2.54
Latinos	2.50	2.57	2.64	2.41	2.38

Note: Scores are based on a 4-point rating scale where 1 signifies *treated not at all fairly* and 4 *treated very fairly*. The higher the rating, the stronger the feeling of fairness.

Latinos and Anglos shared some perspectives about the treatment of racial groups, but not others (see table 2.39). About one-third of the Latinos and one-third of the Anglos (32 percent each) felt that Blacks are treated unfairly. Both groups also felt that Asians receive the best treatment of all three groups (only 20 percent of the Latinos and 13 percent of the Anglos felt that Asians are treated unfairly). However, Latinos reported higher rates of discrimination against Latinos than did Anglos. Close to half of the Latinos compared with one-third of the Anglos felt that Latinos are discriminated against.

Table 2.39. Latino and Anglo Ratings of Treatment of Racial Groups
(Percentages)

Ratings	Blacks	Latinos	Asians
Latino			
Very fairly	11.6	7.1	16.8
Somewhat fairly	45.0	44.0	39.8
Not at all fairly	31.9	44.2	20.0
Don't know	11.5	4.7	23.4
Anglo			
Very fairly	24.6	20.6	30.2
Somewhat fairly	40.7	39.7	47.7
Not at all fairly	31.6	33.6	13.0
Don't know	3.1	6.1	9.1

Finally, the Latino respondents were asked which racial or ethnic group contributes the most to the U.S. economy through their taxes and productivity or, conversely, receives the most

benefit from social services and unemployment payments (see table 2.40). Latinos felt strongly that undocumented persons contribute to the economy more than other groups. Persons with low levels of education felt the strongest about the contributions of the undocumented, and those with high levels of schooling felt that the undocumented are the group most likely to receive the least benefits. Education did not, however, strongly influence Latino attitudes toward other groups.

Table 2.40. Perception of Contribution Made by Various Groups, by Level of Education
(Percentages)

		Years completed			
Contribution by group	Total	0-8	9-11	12	13+
Give more					
Undocumented*	69.0	75.0	59.6	66.2	69.4
Latinos	61.7	74.5	50.8	54.3	58.0
Anglos	48.3	48.1	53.6	45.4	48.1
Asians	43.9	46.3	31.7	38.8	52.7
Blacks	15.7	16.0	13.0	13.2	19.8
Give equally					
Undocumented*	15.0	19.3	10.6	14.1	12.5
Latinos	22.5	16.7	28.8	24.7	23.5
Anglos	23.7	26.4	25.0	18.6	24.7
Asians	22.5	21.0	19.5	20.9	27.0
Blacks	15.3	11.0	16.7	19.7	15.8
Get more					
Undocumented*	16.0	5.7	29.8	19.7	18.1
Latinos	15.8	8.8	20.4	21.0	18.5
Anglos	28.0	25.5	21.4	36.0	27.2
Asians	33.6	32.7	48.8	40.3	20.3
Blacks	69.0	73.0	70.3	67.1	64.4

* Indicates a significant difference between percentages.

Media Usage and Political Affairs

The LACLAS community household survey sought to determine the sources of information that help shape Latino public opinion. The primary source of information for Latinos in Los Angeles County is television (see table 2.41). The respondents with the least schooling relied on television for national and local news more heavily that did Latinos with more schooling, who also used the print media heavily. Regardless of education level, few respondents listened to the radio for news.

Almost three-fourths of the Latinos surveyed thought that Latinos are portrayed negatively in English language television, movies, radio, newspapers, and magazines. However, almost 60 percent felt that Latino politicians and officials are well respected by the media (see table 2.42). About 7 percent and 14 percent, respectively, did not have an opinion on these media issues.

Table 2.41. Main Source of Information, by Level of Education
(Percentages)

Source	Total	Years completed 0-8	9-11	12	13+
Television	70.6	78.4	67.2	75.5	56.0
Newspaper	20.4	13.6	23.4	16.0	33.0
Radio	5.4	5.6	7.8	4.3	3.6
Magazines	1.6	0.0	0.0	2.1	4.8
Other	2.0	2.4	1.6	2.1	2.6

Table 2.42. Portrayal of Latinos in English Language Media, by Level of Education
(Percentages)

Portrayal	Total	Years completed 0-8	9-11	12	13+
Negative image					
Agree	72.2	59.0	77.0	85.6	72.8
Disagree	27.8	41.0	23.0	14.4	27.2
Respect Latino officials					
Agree	59.7	67.9	59.3	50.0	59.5
Disagree	40.3	32.1	40.7	50.0	40.5

Like the general public, Latinos form perceptions through what they see, hear, and read. When asked to give an opinion on how governmental entities are doing their job, respondents gave local boards of education the highest rating, followed closely by local city councils. Latino

Table 2.43. Rating Government Entities, by Level of Education

Entity	Total	Years completed 0-8	9-11	12	13+
Local school board	3.55	3.76	3.42	3.47	3.41
Local city council	3.54	3.65	3.50	3.49	3.47
County Board of Supervisors*	3.45	3.70	3.34	3.31	3.36
California State Legislature	3.37	3.53	3.36	3.27	3.29
U.S. Congress	3.29	3.42	3.25	3.17	3.27

* Indicates a significant difference between ratings.

Note: Scores are based on a 5-point rating scale where 1 represents *doing the job very poorly* and 4 *doing it very well*. The higher the rating, the better the perception of the job done.

respondents also assessed the County Board of Supervisors higher than the California State Legislature and the U.S. Congress. Generally, Latino perceptions of the responsiveness of

particular government entities were not influenced by their level of education. The exception was the County Board of Supervisors, which Latinos with less schooling rated higher than did those with more.

Table 2.44 shows the percentage of respondents who rated government entities *good* or *very good*, according to their preferred language. Language preference was clearly associated with the degree of satisfaction with governmental bodies. English speakers were generally much more critical of government than Spanish speakers. These results echo the findings described earlier for the evaluation of public services and public education.

Table 2.44. Percentage Rating Government Entities Good or Very Good, by Language Preference

Entity	Spanish*	English*
Local school board**	68	44
Local city council**	68	44
County Board of Supervisors**	59	44
California State Legislature**	56	32

* The Spanish category includes those who prefer Spanish; the second category includes those who prefer English or have no preference.

** Indicates a significant difference between response percentages.

Latinos were also asked to give their opinion on two foreign policy issues of importance in 1988 (see table 2.45). Of those who expressed an opinion, about 40 percent supported the Reagan administration's position on Nicaragua and U.S. support of Israel. The greatest degree of support for both policies came from persons with nine to eleven years of schooling. Twenty-eight percent did not know about Contra support, and 39 percent were not able to give an opinion on support of Israel.

Table 2.45. Attitude toward Supporting the Contras and Israel, by Level of Education
(Percentages)

		Years completed			
Issue	Total	0-8	9-11	12	13+
Approve support of the Contras	40.6	34.9	47.8	37.8	45.2
Approve support of Israel	38.0	40.0	46.3	29.7	38.8

The survey asked Latinos whether or not they felt they can affect what the government does. Their responses varied widely by educational group (see table 2.46). Among those with thirteen

or more years of schooling, two-thirds felt that they can affect government, and an additional one-sixth felt that they can do so only some of the time, depending on the issue. By contrast, only 43 percent of the persons with eight years of education or less felt that they can affect the governmental process some or all of the time. Less than 8 percent did not have an opinion.

Table 2.46. Rating Own Ability to Affect Government, by Level of Education
(Percentages)

		Years completed			
Response	Total	0-8	9-11	12	13+
Yes	42.5	20.0	53.1	44.7	65.5
Sometimes, depends	19.1	23.2	17.2	16.0	17.9
No	38.4	56.8	29.7	39.4	16.7

About 44 percent of the Latinos interviewed had no preference for a political party (see table 2.47). One of every four Latinos, however, was a Democrat, and slightly more Latinos were independent than were Republican (15 and 12 percent, respectively). Latinos identified more with the Democratic Party than with the Republican Party, regardless of educational background. Nonetheless, 16 percent of the Latinos with the most education were Republican, as were 12 percent of those who had graduated from high school and 14 percent of those who had nine to eleven years of schooling. Latinos with eight or fewer years of schooling were more likely to be independent than to be affiliated with either major party. This supports earlier findings that Latinos with low levels of education are less likely than others to participate in mainstream political parties.

Table 2.47. Political Affiliation, by Level of Education
(Percentages)

		Years completed			
Affiliation	Total	0-8	9-11	12	13+
Democrat	25.2	16.8	29.7	30.9	36.9
Republican	11.8	5.6	14.1	11.7	15.5
Independent	14.6	18.4	12.5	13.8	13.1
No preference	43.6	54.5	37.5	42.6	32.1
Other	4.8	4.8	6.2	1.1	2.4

Table 2.48 compares the patterns of political participation of Latinos and Anglos. Unlike the greater propensity among Latinos to be affiliated with the Democratic Party, Anglos were more likely to be members of the Republican Party. In addition, only 22 percent of the Anglos compared with 44 percent of the Latinos expressed no party preference. Only about one-third of

the Latinos were currently registered to vote in Los Angeles County compared with four-fifths of the Anglos.

Table 2.48. Political Participation of Latinos and Anglos
(Percentages)

Pattern	Latinos	Anglos
Political affiliation		
Democrat	25.2	28.6
Republican	11.8	34.2
Independent	14.6	13.6
No preference	43.6	21.6
Other	4.8	2.0
Registered to vote	35.3	78.4

As seen in table 2.49, the higher the level of education, the more likely Latinos were to be registered voters. Those who were registered voted more often in presidential than in local or state elections. Overall, the Latinos with the most schooling were the most likely to have voted in the last municipal, state, and presidential elections, and Latinos with nine to eleven years of schooling were the most likely to have voted in the last school board election.

Table 2.49. Percentage Who Were Registered and Voted in the Last Election, by Level of Education
(Percentages)

		Years completed			
Participation	Total*	0-8	9-11	12	13+
Registered**	35.7	11.2	35.9	43.6	63.1
Voted					
County, municipal**	55.7	53.8	42.9	42.1	72.0
State	57.4	53.8	47.6	47.4	70.0
School board	41.8	30.8	52.4	29.0	50.0
1984 presidential	68.8	69.2	76.2	55.3	76.0

* Totals are over 100 percent due to multiple responses.
** Indicates significant differences in percentages between groups.

When asked why they did not vote or were not registered in the last election, 48 percent said they were not eligible (see table 2.50). Ineligibility decreased significantly as education increased. Among those who were eligible, however, 14 percent had not been interested in the election and 9 percent had not registered in time. The remainder had been too busy, considered the issues unimportant, or disliked the candidates. The Latinos with the most schooling said they had been too busy, while those with the least had not been interested.

Table 2.50. Reasons Given for Not Registering or Not Voting in the Last Election, by Level of Education
(Percentages)

Reason	Total*	Years completed			
		0-8	9-11	12	13+
Not eligible**	47.7	62.0	50.0	32.2	39.7
Not interested	14.3	12.4	22.4	12.6	12.7
Didn't register in time	8.5	9.1	3.4	13.8	4.8
Too busy	7.0	2.5	5.2	9.2	14.3
Makes no difference	6.7	5.0	6.9	10.3	4.8
Disliked candidates	4.6	2.5	6.9	5.7	4.8
Forgot	2.7	1.6	1.7	3.4	4.8
Issues not important	2.4	0.8	3.4	4.6	1.6
Other reason	17.3	14.5	10.3	24.1	20.6

* Totals are over 100 percent due to multiple responses.
** Indicates a significant difference in percentages between groups.

PROBLEMS FACED BY LATINO FAMILIES AND LATINOS IN GENERAL

The Latino and Anglo respondents were asked to specify *the most important problems you and your family have at present* (see table 2.51). The four major problem areas identified by Latinos fell within finances, employment, housing, and physical health, in that order of importance. When asked this same question, Anglos listed their top six problems, in order of importance, as finances, physical health, housing, employment, children, and transportation. Although the same concerns surfaced on both lists, each ranked the problem areas differently. Latinos felt more strongly than did Anglos about basic survival issues in Los Angeles County. For example, although both Latinos and Anglos selected financial issues as their biggest problem, 46 percent of the Latinos did so compared with 39 percent of the Anglos.

Table 2.51. Major Problems Facing Latino and Anglo Families
(Percentages)

Problem	Latinos	Anglos
1. Finances	46.0	38.6
2. Lack of employment or steady job	17.6	6.0
3. Housing	13.2	10.5
4. Physical health	8.5	11.5
5. Problems with children	7.3	4.0
6. Neighborhood	5.4	2.5
7. Lack of transportation	4.6	4.0
8. Mental or emotional health	4.0	2.0
9. Legal	.8	2.0

* Totals are over 100 percent due to multiple responses.

The LACLAS study also analyzed the principal problems of Latino families according to the respondent's educational background (see table 2.52). Finances, employment, and housing were critical issues among the less educated, although the importance of all three increased significantly for high school graduates (for example, 39 and 30 percent, respectively, ranked finances as their family's principal problem). Housing was the primary concern of the respondents with the highest levels of schooling, followed closely by employment issues (25 and 23 percent, respectively).

Table 2.52. Major Problems Facing Latino Families, by Level of Education
(Percentages)

		Years completed			
Problems	Total	0-8	9-11	12	13+
Finances	46.0	38.6	14.3	30.0	17.1
Lack of employment	17.6	34.9	13.6	29.6	22.7
Housing	13.2	41.7	8.3	25.0	25.0

The respondents were asked to indicate the major problems facing Latinos in general. They named financial problems as the principal barrier to Latino advancement in Los Angeles County (see table 2.53). In addition to singling out many of the same problems facing their families, the respondents added discrimination and knowledge of English to the list. Problems with English keep Latinos from taking advantage of many educational and employment opportunities. Despite high levels of participation in the labor force, Latino workers in Los Angeles County are concentrated in occupations with low wages, few benefits, and little job security. Thus they ranked employment a serious problem.

Table 2.53. Major Problems Facing Latinos in General

Problems	Percent
1. Finances	20.2
2. Lack of a steady job	12.7
3. Discrimination	11.0
4. Lack of education	9.2
5. Language	8.1
6. Drugs	7.5
7. Crime	4.6
8. Housing	3.5
9. Legal	1.4
10. Other	21.8

Regardless of educational background, Latinos viewed financial problems as their major hurdle (see table 2.54). Their educational background did, however, affect how they ranked the relative importance of other problems facing Latinos. Those with the least education ranked the drug problem higher than other groups, whereas those with twelve or more years of schooling ranked education higher than those with less than a high school education. Persons with nine to eleven years of schooling ranked language problems second, unlike the other groups who ranked it fifth. Discrimination ranked fourth in priority among those with the most and with the least education and third among those in between. Even though the weight given to each issue varied according to educational background, the same concerns cut across all educational groups.

Table 2.54. Ranking Major Problems Facing Latino Families in General, by Level of Education

Years completed			
0-8	9-11	12	13+
1-Finance	1-Finances	1-Finances	1-Finances
2-Employment	2-Language	2-Employment	2-Education
3-Drugs	3-Discrimination	3-Discrimination	3-Employment
4-Discrimination	4-Employment	4-Education	4-Discrimination
5-Language	5-Crime	5-Language	5-Language
6-Education	6-Drugs	6-Crime	6-Drugs
7-Housing	7-Education	7-Legal	7-Crime
8-Crime	8-Housing	8-Housing	8-Housing
9-Children	9-Neighborhood	9-Drugs	9-Children
10-Legal	10-None	10-Services	10-Services

Note: First-mentioned problem has the highest rank.

Perceptions of the problems facing Latinos in Los Angeles County varied somewhat by age, even though the differences were not significant (see table 2.55). Surprisingly, concerns about

Table 2.55. Major Problems Facing Latinos in General, by Age
(Percentages)

	Age			
Problem	17-25	26-40	41-54	55+
Finances	29.2	16.4	16.7	12.5
Lack of a steady job	16.7	13.8	3.0	20.0
Discrimination	5.2	14.2	13.7	10.0
Lack of education	7.3	9.1	9.1	7.5
Language	6.3	10.3	13.7	2.5
Drugs	2.1	8.2	10.6	7.5
Crime	6.3	2.2	4.6	10.0
Housing	2.1	4.3	6.1	2.5
Legal	3.1	.4	3.0	2.5
Other	21.7	21.1	19.5	25.0

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8. Housing	3.5
9. Legal	1.4
10. Other	21.8

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Table 2.54. Ranking Major Problems Facing Latino Families in General, by Level of Education

Years completed			
0-8	9-11	12	13+
1-Finance	1-Finances	1-Finances	1-Finances
2-Employment	2-Language	2-Employment	2-Education
3-Drugs	3-Discrimination	3-Discrimination	3-Employment
4-Discrimination	4-Employment	4-Education	4-Discrimination
5-Language	5-Crime	5-Language	5-Language
6-Education	6-Drugs	6-Crime	6-Drugs
7-Housing	7-Education	7-Legal	7-Crime
8-Crime	8-Housing	8-Housing	8-Housing
9-Children	9-Neighborhood	9-Drugs	9-Children
10-Legal	10-None	10-Services	10-Services

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Discrimination	5.2	14.2	13.7	10.0
Lack of education	7.3	9.1	9.1	7.5
Language	6.3	10.3	13.7	2.5
Drugs	2.1	8.2	10.6	7.5
Crime	6.3	2.2	4.6	10.0
Housing	2.1	4.3	6.1	2.5
Legal	3.1	.4	3.0	2.5
Other	21.7	21.1	19.5	25.0

finances decreased with age. However, both the youngest and oldest age groups were the most concerned about employment needs. Discrimination and language issues were ranked highest by Latinos in the middle age groups. Drug and crime problems were more frequently mentioned among the older age groups than among the younger ones.

Virtually no differences were found according to gender (see table 2.56). Latinas were slightly more concerned about employment and language issues, but males showed a stronger concern for financial problems and drugs.

Table 2.56. Major Problems Facing Latinos in General, by Gender

(Percentages)

Problem	Male	Female
Finances	20.4	17.5
Lack of a steady job	12.2	14.6
Discrimination	12.2	11.7
Lack of education	8.2	8.8
Language	8.2	10.0
Drugs	8.2	6.3
Crime	4.1	4.2
Housing	4.1	3.8
Legal	2.0	1.3
Other	20.4	21.8

IMPLICATIONS FOR LOS ANGELES COUNTY

Latinos in Los Angeles County hold a wide range of opinions on many issues. Among the factors that this study examined was the influence of language preference on perceptions. The LACLAS study found that preference for English increased as the level of education increased, and Spanish was selected overwhelmingly by persons who had eight or fewer years of schooling. Since education also affects perceptions, educational background was used throughout the report to interpret the findings.

Major Problems Facing Latinos

The three most important problems facing Latino families revolved around financial concerns, lack of employment, and discrimination. Following the top three were lack of education, language problems, neighborhood concerns (including drugs, crime, and housing), and legal issues, in order of importance. The attitudes of Latinos toward each of their major problems are reviewed below.

Financial Issues

Simply stated, Latinos have inadequate incomes. At the time of the survey, 54 percent of the Latinos in Los Angeles County had annual household incomes below $20,000, while only 13 percent earned over $40,000. Not only are these figures low given the high cost of living in Southern California, but Latino families are large and their low incomes must support more individuals. Moreover, their income is linked with other characteristics, particularly low levels of educational preparation, limited employment opportunities, and low-paying occupations.

The lack of sufficient income to take care of basic needs places the Latino family in a vulnerable situation. The welfare system, which was established to provide a safety net for low-income families, only assists citizens, legal residents, and children born in the United States. Thus many Latino families cannot rely on many of the programs available to families and individuals in dire economic conditions.

Employment Issues

Latinos in Los Angeles County work: 64 percent of the sample worked full time, and 11 percent worked part time; 10 percent were unemployed and looking for work. Another 15 percent were not in the labor force. Despite high levels of labor force participation, Latinos ranked employment as an issue of serious concern, which reflects their position in the labor market. Latinos work in low-wage jobs that offer few benefits and little security.

Discrimination Issues

Latinos feel discriminated against, and Anglos agree with that assessment. Both Latinos and Anglos also agree that Asians receive the best treatment. However, 21 percent of the Anglos feel that Latinos are treated fairly compared with only 7 percent of the Latinos.

The survey did not detail the kind of unfair treatment nor ask whether it occurred when Latinos are seeking jobs or housing, working, or doing something else. Nevertheless, the survey did reveal that Latinos perceive discrimination widely and that others confirm its existence. Discrimination adds to the problems of low income and lack of job mobility, creating frustration that immobilizes, angers, and discourages many Latinos from tackling problem situations.

Educational Issues

The average Latino in Los Angeles County has a tenth-grade education; in the survey 48 percent had at least a high school degree, 34 percent had no formal degrees or certificates, and 11 percent had at least a bachelor's degree. With two of every three Latinos lacking a postsecondary degree, it is not surprising that they earn such low incomes. Lower levels of

educational attainment not only affect earnings, but also constrict access to alternative sources of information, counseling and other assistance, cultural exposure, political involvement, and other significant activities that enhance opportunities.

Language Issues

The majority of the interviews (59 percent) were conducted in Spanish. Among English speakers, two-thirds were bilingual, but among Spanish speakers, one of every four (27 percent) spoke no English at all. By contrast, 11 percent of the English speakers spoke no Spanish. With Spanish so predominant, the Latino community in Los Angeles County needs to have access to adult education classes to improve their English proficiency.

English language proficiency is highly related to attitudes. Respondents who preferred to be interviewed in Spanish generally rated public services, particularly street lighting, and local governmental bodies much higher than the bilingual and English-speaking respondents did. Spanish speakers were also more likely to give passing grades to the County Board of Education and public schools.

Spanish speakers are more likely to be foreign born and may evaluate public services and municipal government in light of the services available in their country of origin. Thus Spanish speakers rated public services, particularly municipal services and public streets, highly, while native-born residents did not. Persons born in this country may be more critical because they are comparing their neighborhood with ones that appear to be served better than their own.

Neighborhood Issues

Latinos listed illegal drugs as the most critical problem related to crime in their neighborhood. In fact, they separated drugs from crime in general and ranked it as one of the major social and economic issues facing Latinos in the County. Together with the high ranking given to problems with children, drug abuse concerns many families in Los Angeles County.

The major problems related to neighborhood crime are, in order of importance, illegal drugs, burglaries, gang activity, armed robberies, muggings and assaults, and murders. Illegal drug use merits its own category, and the other crimes on the list are often associated with illegal drug activities and abuse.

Most of the Latinos surveyed resided in single-family homes and in large apartment buildings (57 and 30 percent, respectively). Most rented (59 percent), and 38 percent owned their homes. Coupled with low income, the cost of housing is prohibitive for Latinos in most parts of Los Angeles County. As the price of housing continues to increase, the number of Latinos who own houses will continue to decrease. Moreover, overcrowding will continue to worsen.

Residency Issues

Latinos have legal problems and need help resolving them. They ranked legal problems as one of their major concerns because of the need for not only affordable l gal services, but legal assistance in applying for amnesty, which was drawing to a close during the survey period. The majority of the Latino respondents were not U.S. citizens (55 percent), and 27 percent of foreign-born Latinos (or 17 percent of all Latino respondents) were residing in Los Angeles County without legal documentation. Only 15 percent of the non-U.S. citizens reported that they were likely to return to their home country and remain there permanently.

Both legal residency and citizenship predicted how individuals rated various needs. Non-citizens rated particular municipal services (such as street repair) higher than citizens did. Similarly, undocumented residents rated certain services (such as trash collection) higher than legal residents did. The same was true for police protection. Legal and undocumented residents rated police protection positively in the same proportions; however, the proportion who rated police protection negatively was significantly higher among the undocumented than among the legal residents. Thus legal and undocumented residents tended to evaluate some services more positively and others more negatively than citizens.

CONCLUSION

The results of the Los Angeles County Latino Assessment Study allow us to identify Latinos who are particularly vulnerable and require attention from service providers in Los Angeles County.

1. The Working Poor: Latinos employed in low-wage jobs, with little chance for promotion or job mobility.
2. The Minimally Educated: Latinos with less than a high school education at a time when diplomas are rapidly becoming the essential requirement for a job.
3. The Overcrowded Family: Latinos with large families and low incomes who are forced to live in crowded conditions.
4. The Ill: Latinos who need medical attention, but do not have health insurance or cannot afford adequate health care.
5. The Non-English Speaker: Latinos whose opportunities are limited by the fact that they do not speak English.
6. The Resident in Deteriorating Neighborhoods: Latinos who reside in neighborhoods where housing is dilapidated, illegal drug use is rampant, and public services are inadequate.

7. The Unregistered Voter: Latinos who are eligible to vote, but are unregistered and lack an electoral voice.
8. The Non-Legal Resident: Latinos who are ineligible for amnesty, intend to remain in the United States, and cannot seek assistance openly.

Each of the groups listed above represents a segment of the Latino population with significant needs that must be addressed if the quality of life for Latinos in Los Angeles County is to improve.

CHAPTER 3.
LOS ANGELES COUNTY LATINO LEADERSHIP SURVEY

by
Leobardo Estrada and Maura Harrington

This report presents the results of a survey of the identified leadership of Los Angeles County's Latino community. Conducted as the third component of the Los Angeles County Latino Assessment Study (LACLAS), the survey asked Latino leaders to identify specific needs of the Latino community and propose strategies for responding to them. Persons who answered the leadership survey are referred to as the Latino leadership; those who answered the LACLAS household survey (see chapter 2) are referred to as the Latino community respondents.

METHODOLOGY

The leaders surveyed were identified through the following process. First, each member of the LACLAS study's Community Advisory Council was asked to nominate up to three leaders in twenty-four areas, including advocacy organizations, the media, elected office, corporate and small business, labor unions, the legal profession, higher education, women's groups, professional organizations, youth groups, and law enforcement. Leaders were defined as *persons who influence the Latino community in Los Angeles County*. The leaders identified at this stage were then asked to select three leaders in each of the categories. This produced a snowball sample of 360 leaders, who received a survey questionnaire in April 1988. After two follow-up reminders, the overall response rate was 70 percent (242 leaders).

Using members of the Community Advisory Council to create the first list of leaders and the snowball technique to create the second might have excluded some influential, but less visible leaders. The community has not expressed concern, however, which suggests that any omissions were minimal.

CHARACTERISTICS OF LATINO LEADERS

At the time of the survey, the leaders had been active in Los Angeles community affairs for an average of sixteen years. The overwhelming majority had lived in California for over twenty years (88 percent), and almost all (94 percent) were U.S. citizens. Although most were Latino, 9 percent were not. Of the remaining 91 percent, 27 percent identified themselves as Mexican American, 19 percent as Chicano, 11 percent as Latino, 17 percent as Hispanic, 10 percent as their national origin, and 7 percent did not reply. The leaders averaged forty-three years of age: 24 percent were thirty-five years of age and under, 37 percent were thirty-six to forty-five years of age, and 39 percent were over the age of forty-five. Most (61 percent) were men. The

majority of these leaders were Democrats (71 percent), a smaller percentage (15 percent) were Republicans, and 10 percent were Independents--the remainder had no political preference.

The mean level of education was one year beyond a bachelor's degree: 25 percent held a bachelor's degree, 30 percent held a master's degree, and 30 percent had advanced degrees (such as a Ph.D., M.D., J.D., or D.D.). Overall, only 15 percent had not graduated from a four-year college. This high level of education translated into high income: 33 percent earned between $40,000 and $69,000 per year, while 51 percent earned at least $70,000 annually. Indeed, 97 percent of the leadership earned $20,000 or more a year, compared with only 41 percent of the Latinos in Los Angeles County.

COMPARISON OF SALIENT POLICY ISSUES

The Latino leaders were asked to identify, in order of importance and without the aid of prompts, the three most important problems facing Latinos in Los Angeles County. The Latino community respondents also answered this question in the community household survey. Table 3.1 presents the ten most important problems mentioned by each group.

Table 3.1. Major Problems Facing Latinos in Los Angeles County

Latino leadership	Latino community
1. Education	1. Finances
2. Employment	2. Employment
3. Economic development	3. Discrimination
4. Health	4. Education
5. Housing	5. Language
6. Immigration	6. Drugs
7. Political participation	7. Crime
8. Dropout rates	8. Housing
9. Leadership	9. Legal
10. Gangs	10. Other

* The first-mentioned problem has the highest rank.

At first glance, the two lists appear more dissimilar than similar. Assuming a cause-and-effect perspective clarifies, however, some of the differences. Leaders gave top priority to the root cause of economic problems (lack of education) rather than their effect (unemployment, low income). Community respondents, on the other hand, gave top priority to the effect (financial hardship), which they experience harshly, directly, and daily.

Keeping this distinction between cause and effect in mind might suggest that Latinos are not well served by agencies offering programs dealing with substance abuse, law enforcement, housing, and legal problems. Although the leaders might agree, they focused on vehicles for solving the problems: economic development, political participation, and leadership.

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POLICY AREAS OF CONCERN

Rating Defined Policy Areas

Using the results of the Latino community profile and the community survey, The Tomás Rivera Center asked the leaders to examine specific issues within predefined policy areas. The twelve areas are listed in table 3.2 according to the importance that the Latino leadership assigned them. The rankings resemble the answers given to the open-ended question about the salient issues facing Latinos in Los Angeles County. For each policy area, the leaders were asked to recommend programs and preferred sources of support and to indicate whether they preferred decision-making to be centralized or decentralized.

Table 3.2. Ranking Policy Areas Concerning Latinos

Policy area	Score*
Education	4.92
Employment	4.62
Economic development	4.58
Health	4.10
Housing	4.10
Immigration	3.99
Day care	3.95
Food, nutrition	3.66
Latino art, culture, history	3.61
Legal services	3.54
Income maintenance	3.47
Transportation	3.44

* Scores are based on a 5-point rating scale where 1 equals *not at all important* and 5 *extremely important*. Averages are used for rankings.

Allocation of Resources for Latino Programs

The Latino leadership were asked to allocate $20 million among the twelve policy areas, assuming that the money was designated for Latino needs in the County and supplemented the monies currently available. Specifically, they were asked to indicate the percentage they would allocate during two five-year periods. Their allocations of this hypothetical funding are summarized in table 3.3. Looking at overall funding for the two periods, the leadership would concentrate on programs to improve the educational, economic, and employment status of Latinos. Over time, they would slightly reduce funding for these programs in favor of other programs.

Table 3.3. Allocation of Resources, by Percentage Appropriated per Period

	Period		
Policy area	1	2	Total
Education	28.27	25.59	26.97
Economic development	13.20	11.15	12.21
Employment	10.73	11.01	10.85
Housing	8.99	8.34	8.68
Day care	8.37	8.55	8.46
Health	8.11	8.82	8.45
Amnesty, naturalization	4.54	2.50	3.55
Legal services	3.87	6.15	4.98
Food, nutrition	3.81	6.72	5.22
Latino art, culture, history	3.52	4.05	3.78
Transportation	3.36	3.50	3.43
Income maintenance, welfare	3.23	3.62	3.42

Funding Sources for Latino Programs

The leadership then identified sources for funding these programs and specified the percentage that should be solicited from federal, state, and local governments as well as from charitable organizations and corporations (see table 3.4). User fees, which would be collected from the persons using the service, were included as a potential source of revenue.

Table 3.4. Suggested Source of Revenue for Specific Policy Areas

	Government					
Policy area	Federal	State	Local	Charity	Corporation	User fee
Amnesty, naturalization	46.2	8.0	9.9	6.1	19.0	10.8
Day care	23.1	21.6	13.8	5.6	19.3	16.6
Economic development	30.9	24.8	16.1	2.4	19.6	6.2
Education	32.0	36.4	15.2	5.2	7.6	3.6
Employment	31.9	27.0	14.1	6.7	17.3	3.0
Food, nutrition	32.1	25.7	18.7	10.2	6.7	6.6
Health	37.3	27.2	15.5	1.2	5.9	6.9
Housing	37.0	24.9	16.4	2.4	8.1	11.2
Income maintenance, welfare	37.9	30.1	15.7	7.4	5.1	3.8
Latino art, culture, history	17.8	19.7	13.2	14.2	20.1	15.0
Legal services	30.4	23.0	14.1	11.6	6.9	14.0
Transportation	33.5	22.6	21.4	1.3	5.7	15.5
Total	32.5	24.2	15.3	6.8	11.8	9.4

The leaders felt that the federal government should provide the major funding for programs in the following areas:

- Amnesty and naturalization
- Economic development (in addition to state government and the corporate sector)
- Day care (in addition to state government and the corporate sector)
- Employment (in addition to state government)
- Food and nutrition (in addition to state government)
- Health
- Housing
- Income maintenance (in addition to state government)
- Legal services (in addition to state government)
- Transportation.

State government should provide the major funding for programs in the area of education (in addition to state government).

Local government should provide the major funding in the following:

- Transportation
- Food and nutrition
- Income maintenance.

Charitable organizations should provide major support for programs in the following:

- Latino arts and culture
- Legal services
- Food and nutrition.

Corporate organizations should provide substantial support for programs in the following:

- Latino arts and culture (in addition to federal and state government)
- Day care
- Economic development
- Employment.

Decision-Making Domains

The Latino leadership were asked the degree to which they felt decision-making in the key policy areas should be centralized or decentralized. In general, they favored decentralization (see table 3.5). They felt that day care, economic development, employment, education, and transportation should be under local domain. Almost to the same degree, they wanted decision-making concerning Latino art, culture, and history, legal services, and amnesty and immigration

to be decentralized as well or under both local and state domain. Policy areas that required intervention at the state or federal level were food and nutrition, housing, health, and income maintenance and welfare.

Table 3.5. Decision-Making Domain for Each Policy Area

Domain	Score*
Group A: Local	
Day care	2.98
Economic development	2.71
Employment	2.59
Education	2.58
Transportation	2.39
Average rating	2.65
Group B: Local or state	
Latino art, culture, and history	3.21
Legal services	2.68
Amnesty, naturalization	1.95
Average rating	2.61
Group C: State or federal	
Food and nutrition	2.59
Housing	2.44
Health	2.36
Income maintenance, welfare	2.28
Average rating	2.42

* Scores are based on a 4-point rating scale where 1 equals *totally centralized* and 4 *totally decentralized*. Averages are used for rankings. The midpoint is 2.5.

The respondents also ranked for each of the policy areas the relative importance of existing programs or strategies designed to improve the status of Latinos. In the sections that follow, the policy areas are discussed in the order of importance assigned by the leadership, as shown in table 3.2.

RESOLUTION OF POLICY CONCERNS

Education

The leaders overwhelmingly identified education as the top priority for the Latino community in Los Angeles County. The leaders themselves were highly educated (only 15 percent had not graduated from a four-year college), and they felt strongly that education is a fundamental avenue for addressing many other problems (see table 3.6).

Table 3.6. Importance of Policy Issues in Education

Policy issue	Score*
Elementary school programs	4.63
Early college outreach (Upward Bound)	4.62
Early childhood education programs	4.61
High school programs	4.59
Junior high school programs	4.57
Basic skills education (literacy programs)	4.50
Incentives to attract better teachers	4.50
College support programs	4.45
New schools in overcrowded areas	4.31
Community college programs	4.30
Adult education classes (including ESL)	4.16
Bilingual teacher training programs	4.14
Bilingual education (transitional English training)	4.11
Alternative schools for dropouts	3.97
Vocational training	3.95
Busing and magnet school programs	3.49

* Scores are based on a 5-point rating scale where 1 equals *not at all important* and 5 *extremely important*. Averages are used for rankings. The higher the average, the higher the level of importance.

Two types of programs stood out as critically needed: a combination of early childhood and elementary school programs, which target children who are about to begin school, and early college preparatory programs, which prepare students for college. Busing and magnet schools were the programs requiring the least attention from policymakers. The importance of college preparatory programs, along with concerns for K-12 education, appears to reflect a general concern with improving the college attendance of Latinos. Corollary to this concern are the low ratings given vocational education, the curriculum traditionally reserved for Latinos. Although the leaders viewed all the programs as important, they were particularly concerned with making a good, basic education available to Latinos. Designing special programs for minority students was less important than improving the regular educational programs and making them accessible to Latinos.

Although meaningful, these rankings do not provide the complete picture. Some of the programs are designed to meet the same or similar educational objectives. Therefore, it is important to understand how the Latino leadership viewed the interrelationships among the educational programs evaluated. A separate analysis was conducted to determine which programs were perceived to be similar and which groupings were foremost in the minds of the leadership when they examined policy areas and possible solutions.

Group labels were assigned to the clusters of educational programs identified by the Latino leadership (see table 3.7). Group A contains K-12 programs that essentially constitute the

curriculum and regimen of primary and secondary schools. Of concern was the improvement of K-12 programs to increase educational attainment among Latinos.

Table 3.7. Importance of Policy Issues in Education, by Type of Program

Type of program	Score*
Group A: Regular K-12 school programs	
Elementary school programs	4.63
High school programs	4.59
Junior high school programs	4.57
Average score	4.60
Group B: College programs for Latinos	
Early college outreach (Upward Bound)	4.62
College support programs	4.45
Community college programs	4.30
Average score	4.46
Group C: Targeted programs	
Early childhood education programs	4.61
Incentives to attract better teachers	4.50
New schools in overcrowded areas	4.31
Average score	4.47
Group D: Basic and vocational programs	
Basic skills education (literacy programs)	4.50
Adult education (including ESL)	4.16
Alternative schools for dropouts	3.97
Vocational training	3.95
Average score	4.15
Group E: Bilingual and school integration programs	
Bilingual teacher training programs	4.14
Bilingual education (transitional English training)	4.11
Busing and magnet school programs	3.49
Average score	3.91

* Scores are based on a 5-point rating scale where 1 equals *not at all important* and 5 *extremely important*. Averages are used for rankings according to each issue and program cluster. The higher the average, the higher the level of importance.

Group B contains programs that prepare Latinos for college and that support them as college students. For many Latinos, community college is the only avenue to higher education, either because they do not meet the entrance requirements of selective, four-year institutions or because they feel that community college will prepare them for more advanced study. Therefore, student support programs in community colleges are highlighted here.

Group C includes programs that help Latino children develop the prerequisite skills early in their schooling. Also included are programs that attract well-prepared teachers to Latino programs and that provide incentives for building new schools to alleviate overcrowding.

The fourth cluster contains programs to improve basic literacy skills. Aimed at the large segment of the Latino community with less than a seventh-grade education, these programs offer Latino dropouts and adult immigrants educational alternatives to the traditional classroom.

The fifth cluster focuses on programs that aid Spanish-speaking and bilingual children. By improving teacher training and bilingual education programs, these efforts would support the children's native language as well as teach them English. Busing and magnet school programs are included as well.

Generally, the leaders agreed that the state and federal governments should fund the bulk of educational programs, but that corporations and local governments should contribute as well. Further, the majority felt that educational programs should be controlled locally, but 44 percent of the leaders favored centralizing the control over educational programs.

In addition to rating educational programs, Latino leaders were asked to rate the quality of public education for Latino children in Los Angeles County. On an average, they felt that public education is of poor quality. Sixty-two percent rated public education for Latino children either *poor* or *very poor*. This finding sheds light on the high priority placed on K-12 programs by the Latino leadership.

They were also asked how they felt about other issues in the area of education (see table 3.8). The vast majority favored bilingual education and year-round schools but opposed busing. The same series of questions was posed to the Latino respondents in the LACLAS household survey, and 86 percent favored bilingual education, 56 percent desired year-round schools, and 39 percent favored busing. Both Latino community members and Latino leaders tended to agree on these educational issues.

Table 3.8. Opinion on Select Issues in Public Education

Issue	Score*
Bilingual education	3.34
Year-round schools	2.77
Busing children outside neighborhood	2.24

* Scores are based on a 4-point rating scale where 1 equals *strongly oppose* and 4 *strongly favor*. Averages are used for rankings.

Employment

Programs related to employment were the leaders' second priority (see table 3.9). Several intervention programs received particular attention, especially programs that encourage the private sector to develop jobs for and offer job training to unskilled persons. Also included were job training programs for welfare clients, job counseling and placement, and work-study

programs. This combination has been adopted in some of the proposals to fund the GAIN program in California.

Table 3.9. Importance of Policy Issues in Employment, by Type of Program

Type of program	Score*
Group A: Training and assistance	
Job training for unskilled persons	4.64
Private sector job development	4.46
Youth employment	4.36
Job training for welfare clients	4.24
Job counseling and placement	4.11
Work-study programs	4.08
Public employment programs	3.71
Wage subsidy programs	3.50
Average score	4.14
Group B: Improved opportunities and benefits	
Affirmative action programs	4.38
Higher minimum wage	4.09
Expanded unemployment compensation	3.28
Average score	3.92
Group C: Minimum wage	
Repeal minimum wage	2.47

* Scores are based on a 5-point scale where 1 equals *not at all important* and 5 *extremely important*. Averages are used for rankings according to each issue and program cluster. The higher the average, the higher the level of importance.

Group B includes programs that support affirmative action and promote expanding unemployment compensation. With respect to the minimum wage, the leadership were asked to rate two alternatives: (1) increase the minimum wage and (2) repeal the minimum wage altogether. As shown in table 3.9, the leadership were very much in favor of increasing the minimum wage and against repealing it. Some argue that the minimum wage discourages entry-level (youth) employment. The Latino leadership in Los Angeles County did not agree. They argued that these measures would extend employment opportunities to Latinos and provide some financial stability to persons seeking work.

The leaders overwhelmingly agreed that the funding for employment programs such as the Job Partnership Training Act (JPTA) should come from the federal and state governments. They also assigned the corporate sector and local governments a role.

As in education, most of the leaders supported keeping the control over employment programs local. Los Angeles County hosts a diversity of industries and businesses that are distributed over a wide geographic area. Thus regional and industry-specific needs can best be understood and met by local agencies.

Economic Development

The leaders did not overwhelmingly support any specific economic development program (see table 3.10). However, a majority suggested three programs: technical assistance for minority businesses, minority business set-aside contracts (the equivalent of affirmative action programs for businesses), and funding assistance for small businesses (which make venture capital available to minority small businesses).

Table 3.10. Importance of Policy Issues in Economic Development

Policy issue	Score*
Technical assistance to minority-owned businesses	4.23
Minority business set-aside contracts	4.16
Small business funding assistance	4.14
Tax incentive programs	3.95
Community development corporations	3.84
Enterprise zones	3.79

* Scores are based on a 5-point rating scale where 1 equals *not at all important* and 5 *extremely important*. Averages are used for rankings. The higher the average, the higher the level of importance.

Other economic development programs received less support: tax incentives, community development corporations, and enterprise zones. Economic programs in general should be federally funded, but the state government, private sector, and local government should also be involved in bringing economic development to Latino communities.

Health

Health programs were the fourth area of concern (see table 3.11). Programs related to the health of children and their mothers, specifically prenatal and pediatric care, received the highest rankings. In so doing the leaders were exhibiting their concern for making primary health care available to children in low-income households.

Group B addresses health services that run the gamut of family planning to drug treatment to care for the elderly. In particular, emergency care and health insurance coverage are sorely lacking in the Latino community. Long-term care for the elderly was seen as important since few have adequate pensions or health benefits and, therefore, represent one of the most at-risk populations. Family planning services were also highlighted since the Latino community's fertility and the incidence of teenage pregnancy are high.

Table 3.11. Importance of Policy Issues in Health, by Type of Program

Type of program	Score*
Group A: Primary care	
Pediatric care for infants and children	4.49
Prenatal care	4.45
Average score	4.47
Group B: Specialty Services	
Emergency care	4.41
Health insurance coverage	4.38
Long-term care for seniors	4.35
Health promotion and disease prevention	4.24
Treatment for drug and alcohol abuse	4.21
Adolescent health services	4.03
Family planning services	4.01
The chronically ill	3.97
Average score	4.20
Group C: Treatment	
Outpatient care	4.38
Mental health services	4.27
Inpatient care	3.99
Average score	4.21
Group D: Prevention	
Inoculation	4.37
Health screening and early detection	4.34
Health education	4.20
Diagnostic services	3.96
Average score	4.22

* Scores are based on a 5-point rating scale where 1 equals *not at all important* and 5 *extremely important*. Averages are used for rankings according to each issue and program cluster. The higher the average, the higher the level of importance.

The third group of programs involves treatment services: outpatient care, mental health services, and inpatient care, in that order of importance.

Programs to promote health and prevent disease fall into Group D. Although the leadership were not asked to recommend screening programs for specific diseases, Latinos are at high risk of contracting, for example, AIDS, diabetes mellitus, hypertension, heart disease, and cancer. Programs that focus on education, screening, and early detection should be paramount.

Health programs should be funded by the federal and state governments, although all funding sources, including charities, user fees, and corporations, should support them. Unlike their opinions on decision-making in education, employment, and economic development, most leaders felt that health programs should be centralized rather than decentralized.

Housing

Table 3.12 displays how the leadership evaluated the relevance of ten housing programs to the Latino community. Two housing programs were supported overwhelmingly by the leaders: programs that seek to make affordable housing available to Latinos and to the Latino elderly in particular. As the cost of housing continues to rise in Los Angeles County, the need for affordable housing--both rental and owned--becomes more acute. Latino elderly are especially in need of affordable housing since they tend to have few economic resources.

Table 3.12. Importance of Policy Issues in Housing

Policy issue	Score*
Development of affordable homes	4.40
Housing for seniors	4.38
Low-interest home mortgage programs	4.28
Equal housing opportunity	4.26
Incentives to builders in poor areas	4.26
Low-interest home improvement loans	4.05
Housing for the homeless	4.05
Subsidized public housing	3.85
Urban renewal projects	3.77
Ownership and rental supplements	3.71

* Scores are based on a 5-point scale where 1 equals *not at all important* and 5 *extremely important*. Averages are used for rankings. The higher the average, the higher the level of importance.

A second set of recommended programs offers equal housing opportunity, low-interest mortgages, and incentives for contractors to build homes in economically depressed areas. Equal housing programs enforce regulations against bias in selling. The leaders felt that housing discrimination continues to be a problem in Los Angeles County and that enforcement should be given high priority. Low-interest mortgage loans are intended to help Latinos enter the housing market, and incentives are intended to encourage contractors to build affordable, family homes in overcrowded, poor neighborhoods. Housing for the homeless and low-interest home improvement loans were also mentioned.

Once again, the leadership expected federal, state, and local governments to provide the bulk of the funding for these programs; user fees would also help cover the costs of programs such as low-interest home mortgage loans. The leadership had varied opinions about the locus of control and equally favored centralizing and decentralizing control over housing programs.

Immigration

Immigration programs related to amnesty and naturalization were sixth in priority for the Latino leadership. As shown in table 3.13, the leadership gave priority to programs to teach English and U.S. history and government to help immigrants meet naturalization requirements; programs to help recent immigrants gain access to services and adjust to the United States; legal services for persons applying for amnesty and naturalization; and programs providing amnesty and immigration advocacy.

Table 3.13. Importance of Policy Issues in Amnesty and Naturalization

Policy issue	Score*
Programs to teach English and U.S. history and government	4.10
Programs for immigrants in transition	4.07
Legal aid for amnesty and naturalization	4.01
Amnesty and immigration advocacy	3.97

* Scores are based on a 5-point rating scale where 1 equals *not at all important* and 5 *extremely important*. Averages are used for rankings. The higher the average, the higher the level of importance.

Each of these programs addresses recent needs created by the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1987, which mandates programs that teach English and U.S. history to applicants for naturalization and amnesty. Almost one million persons have applied for amnesty, and millions of other long-term residents of California are eligible for naturalization. Moreover, many immigrants from diverse nations need help adapting to this country. Legal services and immigration advocacy are two aspects of efforts to help eligible immigrants apply for amnesty and secure their rights in immigration hearings.

The leaders agreed that the federal government should bear the greatest share of the cost of amnesty and immigration programs. User fees and local and state government should also cover small but equal shares of the financial burden. The majority believed that decisions concerning those programs should be centralized since naturalization and amnesty fall under one central agency, the Immigration and Naturalization Service.

The leadership were asked to state their opinion on four immigration and citizenship issues. Their responses are shown in table 3.14. The leadership overwhelmingly agreed that families should remain united under the amnesty program. They generally opposed employer sanctions for hiring undocumented persons.

Table 3.14. Position on Immigration and Citizenship Issues

Issue	Score*
Legislation to unify family if one person is eligible	3.78
Current legislation granting amnesty	3.58
Extension of filing period for amnesty	3.45
Employer sanctions for hiring undocumented persons	2.13

* Scores are based on a 4-point rating scale where 1 represents *strongly oppose* and 4 *strongly favor*. Averages are used for rankings. The higher the average, the more in favor of the issue.

Day Care

Day care is vital for three target groups: children, seniors, and the handicapped (see table 3.15). The targeted children come from the homes of employed single mothers, welfare mothers who want to work, families at risk of child abuse, unwed adolescent mothers, and employed single fathers. These households often lack support systems, adequate economic resources, or adequate supervision. Some lack all three. Seniors and the handicapped are also high on the list of priorities among the Latino leadership.

Table 3.15. Importance of Policy Issues in Day Care, by Target Group

Issue and group	Score*
Group A: Children	
Employed single mothers	4.57
Mothers on welfare who want to work	4.53
Families at high risk of child abuse	4.51
Unwed adolescent mothers	4.39
Employed single fathers	4.28
Dual wage earner families	3.90
Average score	4.36
Group B: Seniors and the handicapped	
Seniors requiring supervision or care	4.19
Handicapped or disabled persons	4.16
Average score	4.18

* Scores are based on a 5-point rating scale where 1 equals *not at all important* and 5 *extremely important*. Averages are used for rankings according to each issue and target group cluster. The higher the average, the higher the level of importance.

The leaders assigned funding for day care to various sources: the federal, state, and local governments, the corporate sector, and user fees. They did not view charitable organizations as a

major funding source. Finally, they largely supported decentralized decision-making for day care programs.

Food and Nutrition

The leaders identified food and nutrition programs by their principal target populations (see table 3.16). The most needy were pregnant women, followed by mothers of infants and children, low-income families, seniors, and the homeless. Each of these populations needs to receive well-balanced meals on a consistent basis. The leaders divided the food and nutrition programs into two categories: those promoting nutrition for women and their children and those aimed at the needy in general.

Table 3.16. Importance of Policy Issues in Food and Nutrition, by Type of Program

Type of program	Score*
Group A: Women and their children	
Pregnant women	4.55
Mothers of infants and small children	4.54
Elementary school lunch programs	4.25
Average score	4.45
Group B: The needy	
Low-income families	4.41
Seniors	4.41
The homeless	4.22
Individuals with health problems	4.18
Nutrition education	4.06
Welfare recipients	3.74
Average score	4.17

* Scores are based on a 5-point rating scale where 1 equals *not at all important* and 5 *extremely important*. Averages are used for rankings according to each issue and program cluster. The higher the average, the higher the level of importance.

The leadership expected the federal, state, and local governments to share the cost of providing food and nutrition programs. They also thought that charities, the corporate sector, and user fees should supplement the costs borne by the government. Finally, the leaders did not clearly agree on the preferred locus of decision-making; they supported centralized and decentralized decision-making about equally.

Latino Art, Culture, and History

The leaders were moderately concerned with supporting Latino art and cultural programs (see table 3.17). Education-related programs in Latino arts and culture received the highest level of

support, in particular, college scholarships for Latinos to study the arts and apprenticeships and community training programs in the arts. These were selected because they aim to develop emerging Latino artists. The second-priority programs included a Latino museum, funds for young artists, commissions to Latinos for creating public art, and subsidies for low-cost admissions to cultural events. The support for a Latino museum appears to be part of a larger interest in establishing a central location to house and support diverse cultural activities and to symbolize Latino culture.

Table 3.17. Importance of Policy Issues in Latino Arts and Culture

Issue	Score*
College scholarships for Latino art students	4.05
Funding for Latino internships and training	3.90
Support for a Latino museum of art and history	3.74
Funding for young Latino artists	3.71
Grants to Latino artists	3.66
Commissions for murals by Latino artists	3.65
Subsidized admissions to cultural events	3.46

* Scores are based on a 5-point rating scale where 1 equals *not at all important* and 5 *extremely important*. Averages are used for rankings. The higher the average, the higher the level of importance.

The leadership assigned funding the arts to the corporate sector, followed by state and federal governments. User fees, nonprofit organizations, and local government should contribute significantly as well. The leaders clearly felt that the arts should be programmed on a decentralized basis.

Legal Services

Legal services were ranked tenth in importance. As seen in table 3.18, they include programs that provide aid to Latinos with legal problems related to their ethnicity and that provide services related to civil litigation. Legal assistance is particularly needed to fight cases of employment discrimination. Assistance related to amnesty and deportation hearings and community legal aid are also needed. Support for legal aid has become more important as federal funding for this service has declined. The need for amnesty assistance was in the forefront at the time of the survey and will continue to be important for Latinos who are denied permanent legal residence.

Civil litigation includes class-action suits and impact litigation. Although class-action suits have been less successful recently, the leadership supported this legal tactic. Other recommendations included programs offering legal assistance with social security, disability, unemployment compensation, and tenant-landlord disputes. Each of these services is commonly provided by lawyers, and many Latinos cannot afford to pay for legal assistance.

Leaders felt that the funding for legal aid services should lie with the federal and state governments. Charitable organizations, user fees, and local government should also supplement the federal and state aid. Most leaders agreed that legal services should be decentralized.

Table 3.18. Importance of Policy Issues in Legal Services, by Type of Program

Type of program	Score*
Group A: Legal assistance	
Employment discrimination	4.20
Amnesty assistance	4.00
Support for community legal aid	3.94
Deportation hearings	3.88
Average score	4.01
Group B: Civil litigation	
Class-action suits and impact litigation	3.87
Social security, disability, unemployment disputes	3.75
Tenant and landlord disputes	3.74
Affordable services to mid-income wage earners	3.60
Adjudication and negotiation services	3.42
Small claims	3.11
Average score	3.58

* Scores are based on a 5-point rating scale where 1 equals *not at all important* and 5 *extremely important*. Averages are used for rankings according to each issue and program cluster. The higher the average, the higher the level of importance.

Income Maintenance

Income maintenance programs are aimed at the poor and persons at risk of institutionalization. The leaders focused on programs to help the elderly and the physically disabled whose financial resources are often limited (see table 3.19). They ranked single mothers and low-income families as the next most needy.

Table 3.19. Importance of Policy Issues in Income Maintenance and Welfare

Target group	Score*
Seniors	4.21
Handicapped and disabled	4.15
Single mothers	4.11
Low-income families	4.00
The homeless	3.84
Unemployed workers	3.83
Immigrants	3.63

* Scores are based on a 5-point rating scale where 1 equals *not at all important* and 5 *extremely important*. Averages are used for rankings according to each issue. The higher the average, the higher the level of importance.

The leadership clearly placed the responsibility for income maintenance and welfare programs on the federal, state, and local governments, in that order. Accordingly, the majority preferred centralizing control over these programs.

Transportation

The final policy area of concern is transportation (see table 3.20). The Latino leadership felt priority should be given to programs expanding public transportation services in Latino communities and providing specialized, cost-sharing programs for the elderly and the poor. Increasing bus security was also considered highly important.

Table 3.20. Importance of Policy Issues in Transportation

Type of program	Score*
Increased bus service in Latino communities	4.08
Increased security on buses	4.06
Specialized vehicle services	4.03
Metro rail in Latino communities	4.00
Subsidized bus fares for the needy	3.96
Express commuter bus service	3.82

* Scores are based on a 5-point scale where 1 equals *not at all important* and 5 *extremely important*. Averages are used for rankings according to each issue. The higher the average, the higher the level of importance.

The leadership felt that funding for transportation programs should be derived from federal, state, and local sources. User fees were also viewed as an important source of revenue. A blend of centralized and decentralized control over transportation programs was indicated.

Political Representation of Latinos

The leadership were asked to evaluate strategies for increasing the political representation of Latinos in Los Angeles County (see table 3.21). They overwhelmingly supported voter registration and electing more Latinos to public office. The two approaches are complementary since registering more Latinos can translate into electing more Latinos to office. Increasing the involvement of Latinos with the major political parties and the number of amnesty and citizenship programs was also mentioned. Also important were strengthening Latino advocacy groups and building coalitions with other ethnic and racial groups. Many of the leaders were convinced that social change requires more than the actions of individuals and that a collective voice is louder than one voice alone.

Table 3.21. Strategies for Increasing Latino Political Representation in Los Angeles County, by Type of Activity

Type of activity	Score*
Group A: Voter enhancement efforts	
Voter registration	4.86
Amnesty and citizenship	4.01
Group B: Mainstream politics and coalition-building	
Election of Latinos to public offices	4.64
Involvement with major political parties	4.16
Stronger Latino advocacy groups	4.00
Coalitions with other ethnic minority groups	3.99
Stronger Latino political groups	3.70

* Scores are based on a 5-point rating scale where 1 equals *not at all important* and 5 *extremely important*. Averages are used for rankings according to each issue and activity cluster. The higher the average, the higher the level of importance.

Government Responsiveness

Table 3.22 shows how the leaders, according to their place of residence, rated the responsiveness of various public and municipal agencies to the Latino community. Leaders

Table 3.22. Rating the Responsiveness of Various Levels of Government, by Leaders' Place of Residence

Residence and government entity	Score*
Leaders living in the city	
Los Angeles City Council	2.84
Los Angeles Unified School Board	2.57
California State Legislature	2.38
Los Angeles Community College Board	2.32
U.S. Congress	2.20
Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors	2.10
Leaders living outside the city	
Local school board	2.61
Local community college board	2.45
Local board of education	2.42
Local city council	2.20

* Scores are based on a 5-point rating scale where 1 equals *not at all responsive* and 5 *extremely responsive*. Averages are used for rankings.

residing in Los Angeles rated the Los Angeles City Council, the Los Angeles Board of Education, and the California State Legislature as the agencies that are the most responsive to the community; they rated the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, U.S. Congress, and the

Los Angeles Community College Board as the least responsive. Los Angeles County encompasses eighty-two independent cities, however, and leaders who live outside the city proper rated their local school board and community college board as the most responsive agencies and their local city councils and boards of education as the least.

A good indicator of government responsiveness is the perceived adequacy of public services. Table 3.23 shows how various public services were rated by the Latino leadership and the Latino community respondents. The leaders tended to be more critical than community respondents of the quality of services provided to Latinos in Los Angeles County. The leadership tended to rank the lowest the public services that they are the least likely to use: welfare, public transportation, and County health services. On the other hand, they felt that trash collection, police protection, and parks and recreation services were adequate.

Table 3.23. Rating Public Services, by Latino Leaders and the Community

Public service	Leaders	Community
Trash collection	2.81	3.89
Police protection	2.74	3.52
Parks and recreation	2.61	3.67
Street lighting	2.59	3.68
Welfare, public assistance	2.43	3.37
Public transportation	2.34	3.71
Street cleaning	2.33	3.68
Street repair	2.32	3.63
County health services	2.23	3.53
Average rating	2.49	3.63

Note: Scores are based on a 5-point scale where 1 equals *very poor* and 5 *very good*. Averages are used for rankings.

Race Relations

The leadership also evaluated the importance of working with political and community leaders from other racial and ethnic groups in Los Angeles County. The vast majority (97 percent) felt that working with leaders from other groups was important. In practice, 52 percent worked frequently with them and 40 percent did so sometimes (see table 3.24). The Latino leadership worked most often with Anglo, followed by Black, Asian, and Jewish, leaders, in that order.

The Latino leadership were asked how *fairly* they felt Asians, Blacks, and Latinos are treated by the majority of Los Angeles County Anglos. *Fairly* was defined in terms of job opportunities, housing, education, and availability of services and resources. They generally thought that Anglos treat both Asians and Blacks better than Latinos (see table 3.25).

Table 3.24. Importance and Frequency of Working with Leaders of Other Ethnic Groups

Item	Score
Importance	3.69*
Frequency	3.43**

* Score is based on the average on a 4-point scale where 1 signifies *not important at all* and 4 *very important*.

** Score is based on the average on a 4-point scale where 1 signifies *never* and 4 *frequently*.

Table 3.25 compares the perceptions of racial treatment held by both the Latino community respondents and the Latino leadership. The community respondents were asked how they felt Asians, Blacks, and Latinos are treated by most Americans, instead of how they are treated by Anglos in Los Angeles County. Generally, the leaders felt that the three groups, including Latinos, are treated worse than the Latino community respondents did. It may be that Asians are perceived to be treated more fairly because of the refugee status and related benefits many of them receive when they arrive in the United States, unlike Latinos who typically do not receive this form of treatment.

Table 3.25. Perception of Anglo Treatment of Specific Racial or Ethnic Groups, by Latino Leaders and the Community

Minority group	Leaders	Community
Asians	2.94	2.90
Blacks	2.27	2.66
Latinos	1.98	2.50

Note: Scores are based on a 4-point scale where 1 signifies *treated very unfairly* and 4 *treated very fairly*. Averages are used for rankings. The higher the rating, the stronger the feeling of fairness.

When the leaders were asked if any of the groups are treated too fairly, 18 percent responded that Asians are, 15 percent felt that Blacks are, and only 3 percent thought that Latinos are treated too fairly.

The participants also read statements about race relations and were asked the extent to which they agreed with each (see table 3.26). They disagreed with the statements that Latinos have made greater advances than Blacks in the County and that Latinos have advanced more than Blacks and Asians nationally. They also perceived tension between Latinos and Blacks and between Latinos and Anglos. They noted less tension, however, between Latinos and Asians.

Table 3.26. Opinions Regarding Race Relations

Issue	Score*
Latino advancement: Group comparisons	
Latinos have made greater advances than Blacks in Los Angeles	2.05
Latinos have made greater advances than Blacks in the United States	1.93
Latinos have made greater advances than Asians in the United States	1.71
Intergroup tension in Los Angeles	
Little tension exists between Latinos and Asians	2.59
Little tension exists between Latinos and Blacks	1.94
Little tension exists between Latinos and Anglos	2.31
Cultural barriers to advancement	
Despite background barriers, one can succeed through effort	2.69
Discrimination is a matter of money and socioeconomic success	2.23
Latinos will never be accepted due to ethnicity	2.07
For acceptance, one must give up ethnic identification and customs	1.78

* Scores are based on a 4-point scale where 1 equals *strongly disagree* and 4 *strongly agree*. The midpoint, 2.5, means neither agree nor disagree. Averages are used for rankings.

They tended to agree that an individual can succeed through effort and in spite of his or her background. They disagreed with the view that discrimination is a matter of money or social class more than of race or ethnicity. They also disagreed that to be accepted into U.S. society requires giving up one's ethnic identity and customs.

Because the media are so instrumental in shaping public opinion, the leaders were asked whether the media adequately cover the issues that concern Latinos in Los Angeles County (see table 3.27). In general, they felt that the Spanish language media are considerably more attentive to Latino issues than the English language media. In particular, the Spanish language press was considered the most attentive, and English language radio and television the least.

Table 3.27. Media Treatment of Latino Issues in Los Angeles County

Media	Score*
Spanish language press	3.05
Spanish language radio	2.95
Spanish language television	2.90
English language press	2.08
English language television	1.83
English language radio	1.83

* Scores are based on a 4-point scale where 1 signifies *not at all adequate* and 4 *very adequate*. Averages are used for rankings. The higher the average, the better the treatment of Latino issues by the media.

IMPLICATIONS FOR LOS ANGELES COUNTY

This chapter summarizes the results of the leadership survey conducted as the third part of the Los Angeles County Latino Assessment Study. The 242 leaders in the Latino community identified the three most important issues facing Latinos in Los Angeles County and ranked twelve policy areas by level of importance. They later assigned priority to issues and programs within each policy area. Education, employment, and economic development were the three most salient issues for Los Angeles, followed by health, immigration, and day care.

Education Policy

The leadership felt that programs targeted to Latino students at various levels of the educational system are the most important means of improving the educational status of Latinos. In addition to regular K-12 programs, they wanted more early college outreach and early childhood education programs as well as more incentives to attract better teachers to the community and to build new schools in overcrowded areas.

They supported educational interventions that begin to prepare Latino children in early childhood. Many minority children are not prepared to enter schools whose environment and language are foreign to them. The leaders also supported programs in bilingual education, busing, magnet schools, and bilingual teacher training.

They were concerned about the preparation Latinos receive in secondary schools and specifically wanted more Latinos to benefit from curricula that prepare them to enter college and take advantage of job opportunities. They wanted Latino students to become college students and thus gave lower ratings to vocational programs and alternative schools for dropouts and higher ratings to college preparation and support programs. They felt that programs aimed at younger children would reduce the need for vocational and special programs in the future.

The leadership were optimistic about funding and rated the local board of education as one of the governing bodies most responsive to the Latino community.

Employment Policy

The second most important issue was employment. The leadership believed that the community urgently needs more jobs and more job advancement opportunities. They advocated job training programs, private sector job development, job counseling and placement, and public employment programs. They also supported enforcing the existing affirmative action programs, increasing the minimum wage, and expanding unemployment compensation. Wage-subsidy programs were also mentioned as ways to make on-the-job training more feasible for Latinos.

The leadership recommended that businesses and schools form partnerships to increase the Latino student's awareness of and experience in the working world. They favored work-study programs that teach job skills to Latino youths who are in school; these programs encourage students to stay in school and allow them to earn extra income. This would help prevent students from dropping out of school to support their family.

Economic Development Policy

Economic development was the leaders' third priority for the Latino community in Los Angeles County. They viewed technical assistance to minority-owned businesses and minority business set-aside contracts as keys to helping Latinos advance in the business community. They also strongly favored programs that improve the general business environment and that stimulate business ventures within the community, such as small business funding, tax incentive programs, community development corporations, and enterprise zones.

Health Policy

Issues related to health were the fourth issue of importance to Latino leaders in Los Angeles County. Low-income Latinos live in a complex state of poverty, which is the result of low educational attainment, poor competency in the English language, and, for many, a precarious legal status. These factors take their toll on many Latinos and contribute to deteriorating physical and mental health, particularly among the poor. The leaders were concerned with four principal types of health care: primary care, specialty services, treatment, and prevention. Programs for infants and young children were the most critical. Health services included health insurance coverage, drug and alcohol treatment, and family planning. Also important was the care received in outpatient, inpatient, and mental health settings and a set of programs aimed at educating Latinos about health concerns, diagnosing illnesses, inoculating children and adults, and screening for diseases.

The leadership rated the Los Angeles County health service system as poor and local government as unresponsive to the needs and interests of Latinos. The state government, on the other hand, was judged to be more responsive to the community than the local city councils or the County Board of Supervisors.

Immigration Policy

Immigration ranked fifth in importance. With poverty and unemployment common, especially among recent immigrants, the leaders supported programs that provide financial, legal, and other assistance to immigrants.

Day Care Policy

Day care, which was ranked sixth, was considered essential. Increasing the availability and accessibility of day care would enable many Latinos to find full- or part-time jobs or attend school. The leaders identified two target groups: persons who are responsible for children and those who are responsible for seniors and the handicapped.

Political Participation Issues

The resolution of many problems facing Latinos in Los Angeles County necessitates more political involvement among Latinos. Mainstream political involvement through voter registration drives, Latino election campaigns, and the major political parties was viewed as the most important strategy. Building stronger Latino advocacy and political groups and coalescing with other ethnic minority groups were also viewed as important strategies.

Race Relations Issues

The Latino leadership were open and willing to work with leaders from other racial and ethnic groups. In fact, more than half worked frequently with the leaders of other groups. They felt that Latinos are discriminated against because they do not receive the same assistance and opportunities as other groups. In general, they were optimistic and felt that Latinos could successfully integrate into the community as a whole without sacrificing their identity and customs.

Budget Priorities

Finally, the leaders were asked to allocate a hypothetical $20 million to programs for the Latino community in Los Angeles County. The twelve areas were amnesty and naturalization; day care; economic development; education; employment; food and nutrition; health; housing; income maintenance and welfare; Latino art, culture, and history; legal services; and transportation. The money would raise the current level of funding and was to be spent in two five-year periods.

In the first period, the leaders appropriated almost 30 percent to education, 14 percent to economic development, and 11 percent to employment. These same areas received the most money in the second period, but in smaller amounts. In both periods, housing, day care, and health, in that order, also received substantial allocations.

The leadership indicated that all sources should contribute funds: federal, state, and local governments, as well as charitable organizations, the corporate sector, and user fees. In general, they felt that the federal government should provide funds primarily for amnesty, economic

development, education, and employment; state government should primarily fund day care, education, income maintenance, employment, and health; local government should fund mostly transportation, food and nutrition, and income maintenance. Charitable organizations should support Latino arts and culture as well as legal services and food and nutrition. The corporate sector was assigned responsibility principally for Latino arts and culture, amnesty, day care, economic development, and employment. User fees were considered appropriate for funding day care, Latino arts and culture, amnesty, legal services, and transportation.

In general, the Latino leaders favored decentralizing the decision-making for programs affecting Latinos. They felt that day care, economic development, legal services, employment, and Latino arts and culture should be under local domain. They wanted decisions on education, transportation, and income maintenance and welfare made at the state or federal level. Issues related to immigration, food and nutrition, housing, and health were considered national problems and placed at the federal level.

The Latino leadership in Los Angeles County were concerned about and knowledgeable of the types of policies and programs needed to address the most pressing problems of Latinos in the County. The culminating activity of the Los Angeles County Latino Assessment Study was the focus group activity, which gave the leadership the opportunity to articulate specific strategies for addressing the priorities outlined here. Those focus groups, which brought the project full circle, are the subject of the final chapter.

CHAPTER 4.
LOS ANGELES COUNTY LATINO FOCUS GROUP ACTIVITY

by
Julie Solis

This chapter presents the opinions expressed by leaders in the Latino community who participated in the focus groups conducted by The Tomás Rivera Center as part of the Los Angeles County Latino Assessment Study (LACLAS). In the focus groups, which took place in 1988, leaders identified and discussed funding priorities and strategies for addressing the concerns and needs of Latinos in Los Angeles County.

This study, the last of four activities that comprised the LACLAS study, built on the findings of the community and leadership surveys. By further investigating the problems identified in the surveys and developing strategies for dealing with them, the focus groups were the final, culminating activity of the LACLAS study.

METHODOLOGY

A total of fifty-seven individuals participated in eight focus groups, which were convened in the months of July and August 1988. The groups met for an average of three hours each and ranged in size from five to eleven participants who had answered the leadership survey, represented various sectors of the community (such as advocacy groups, media, elected officials), and shared a common ground of experience in the policymaking arena. The process was constantly refined in six debriefing meetings in which the study's researchers and group facilitators discussed and summarized the outcome of the sessions.

The focus groups were conducted in three phases:

I. Issue Prioritization and Definition

II. Primary Funding Priorities

III. Secondary Funding Priorities.

Each phase of the process built on the previous phase. Thus, the work done in Phase I provided the basis for examining the issues in Phase II, which established the base for looking at issues in Phase III.

In Phase I, the participants started with an alphabetical list of the primary areas of Latino concerns and needs that were identified by the community and leadership surveys. This list was

a merged summary of results and gave no weight or priority to the issues. The participants were then asked to do the following:

- Determine the issue areas that should be considered funding priorities for Latinos in Los Angeles County.
- Set the funding priorities for addressing those issues.
- Define each of the funding priorities.
- Reconcile discrepancies between the perceptions of the leadership and community about Latino needs.

Two focus groups (one with five and one with eight participants) met in Phase I. In each meeting, participants were leaders from the Latino community in Los Angeles County who were experienced in setting funding priorities.

In Phase II, leaders who were experienced in assessing the needs of Latinos over the long run received lists of the funding priorities and the definitions set in Phase I. They met in three focus groups to review the list and discuss the following questions:

- In what funding priority areas can the Latino community make the most headway by the year 2000? What types of programs are needed within the next ten to twenty years?
- What conditions and strategies lend themselves to the progress foreseen for each of these areas?

In Phase III, leaders who were experienced in addressing the immediate needs of Latinos in Los Angeles County gathered in three meetings to discuss the remaining issue areas identified in Phase II. They were asked the following:

- What types of program interventions are needed to bring the remaining areas up to par?
- What conditions deter and what strategies foster progress in these areas?

FINDINGS

The focus groups produced a rich source of perspectives and insights that in many ways substantiate the findings of the LACLAS study leadership and community surveys. The discussion that follows presents the results of each phase in turn.

Phase I -- Issue Prioritization and Definition

The participants in Phase I identified the following issue areas as funding priorities, in order of importance, for Latinos in Los Angeles County:

1. Education
2. Economic development
3. Political participation
4. Crime
5. Social services
6. Health
7. Housing
8. Immigration
9. Legal matters
10. Leadership

The participants in this phase and throughout the focus group process set priorities by adopting an underlying causal perspective. Time and time again, they echoed the fundamental need to improve, first and foremost, the educational, economic, and political status of Latinos. They felt that treating these three primary concerns would directly affect the root problems and ultimately reduce the expressed concerns and needs manifested in the areas of health, housing, social services, and other areas. For this reason, leaders used the term secondary when referring to the latter set of issue areas.

In Phase I, the participants were asked to compare their top ten funding priorities with those set by the persons who responded to the LACLAS leadership and community surveys. (The leadership and community priorities were compiled from answers to a question asking the individual to list and prioritize *the three most important problems facing Latinos in Los Angeles County*.)

Rank	Focus groups	Leadership survey	Community survey
1.	Education	Education	Economic resources
2.	Economic development	Employment	Employment
3.	Political participation	Economic development	Discrimination
4.	Crime	Health	Education
5.	Social services	Housing	Language
6.	Health	Immigration	Drugs
7.	Housing	Political participation	Crime
8.	Immigration	Dropout rates	Housing
9.	Legal	Leadership	Legal
10.	Leadership	Gangs	Other

Their top priorities resembled those of the leadership, but were surprisingly different from those of the community. Notably, the focus group participants excluded from their list of priorities the problems of discrimination and language, which were emphasized by the community. This difference was not one of oversight, however, as became clear in the discussion; the participants considered discrimination as a given, that is, a problem that cuts across all issues and should be addressed within specific policy areas. Language was viewed as a

subset of education, although it was noted that the relationship between language and culture is important and raises concerns outside education.

Another difference arose in the priority placed on political participation and leadership, which the participants felt should remain on their list even though neither appeared on the community's list of priorities. Although the leaders recognized that political participation and leadership are categorically different from the bread-and-butter issues, they felt that both are central to other priority areas. With the exception of political participation, all three lists ranked education, economic, and employment issues quite high. The community respondents listed employment as their first concern and education as their fourth. In contrast, both Latino leaders and focus group participants (having perhaps a more causal perspective) placed education as their first concern--"given an education, the jobs will come." Each priority area is defined in the following sections, which outline the primary and secondary funding priorities.

Phase II -- Primary Funding Priorities

The participants in Phase II indicated that with the proper, sustained support the Latino community would make the most headway in the following areas, by order of priority:

1. Political participation
2. Education
3. Economic development
4. Leadership development

These are the fundamental areas that require urgent attention and sustained funding in Los Angeles County. Progress in solving problems related to the political, educational, and economic status of Latinos will directly affect the secondary issues discussed in Phase III. The following summarizes the discussion of each funding priority, in order of importance, and presents the leaders' recommendations for programs and strategies.

1. Political Participation

Latinos could make major strides in the political arena in the near future. Sheer demographics have increased the potential political force of Latinos and the general awareness of the Latino community. In addition, the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1987 (IRCA) has created a new pool of potential voters. Two million immigrants will be naturalized as a result of the legislation's amnesty provision, and they will be eligible to vote in 1994. Latinos are also playing a greater role in coalition-building and in contributing financially to political campaigns. Finally, Latinos who are active in political organizations such as UNO (United Neighborhood Organization) are seeing the results of their efforts and feeling that they can make a difference.

As the study progressed, funding for programs related to political participation became increasingly important. Political participation moved from a priority rating of 7 in the leadership survey to 3 in Phase I of the focus groups and finally to 1 in Phase II. Similarly, leadership was raised from a priority rating of 9 in the leadership survey to one of 4 in Phase II of the focus groups. The leadership in the Latino community saw the political arena as the most viable and effective means of improving the status of Latinos. Their logic was that if Latinos had a stronger voice in the political process, more funding would be allocated, in the long run, to programs that benefit Latinos.

The leadership felt that the time is ripe for promoting the mobilization and self-determination of Latinos through political processes. The key mechanisms for doing so are education and financial support. They identified both programmatic and strategic needs related to Latino political participation. Their recommendations include the following efforts:

- Conduct education and outreach programs for immigrants promoting naturalization and citizenship as a means of exercising their right to vote;
- Educate Latinos on the importance and benefits of being a good citizen and having civic pride;
- Involve Latinos, particularly third- and fourth-generation Latinos, in the political system in a practical, nuts-and-bolts way.

They also recommended the following strategies for increasing the community's level of political participation:

- Promote the development of simpler voter registration procedures;
- Promote the participation of Latinos in coalitions based on interest and not simply on ethnicity or race;
- Promote the development of political agendas at the local community level;
- Develop a fuller and broader Latino political agenda at the City and County levels in order to hold elected officials accountable;
- Increase the community's interest and success in making its political representatives more accountable to it;
- Institute mechanisms to increase access to current elected and appointed officials;
- Increase the number of Latino-backed Political Action Committees (PACs) and other interest groups, including those that contribute monetarily to political campaigns; and
- Increase the representation of Latinos in the media, which play an important role in promoting civic participation.

2. Education

Latinos are rapidly becoming the majority student population in many public schools in Los Angeles. Latinos have been demanding more accountability from the school system as their awareness of the importance of education has grown. The reasons for their increased involvement are many. More Latinos are found throughout the educational system, as teachers and administrators as well as students, than ever before. Perhaps immigrants are challenging native-born, acculturated Latinos to excel and place more value on getting an education. Certainly the changing economic structure of this country has increased awareness of the need for an educated work force; not only Latinos, but corporate America as well is getting involved in educational initiatives, such as promoting computer literacy.

The programmatic recommendations in education revolve around three major concerns: (1) reducing the high school dropout rate, (2) increasing the rate of educational attainment beyond the high school level, and (3) attending to the needs of special groups, specifically immigrants and single-parent families. The participants recommended the following:

- Increase the number of preschool and early education programs for Latino children, with a special focus on the development of problem-solving skills;
- Increase the number of motivational programs that keep students in school and encourage parents to be more involved in their children's education;
- Increase the number of bilingual education and English as a Second Language (ESL) classes taught by certified teachers;
- Develop high school retention programs that are relevant to Latinos and that include counseling and support systems;
- Develop community college-level programs that provide support services to immigrants and former dropouts;
- Develop adult education and basic literacy programs tailored to immigrants and returning students; and
- Increase the number of retention programs at the undergraduate and graduate levels.

The leadership also identified strategic recommendations for improving education:

- Increase Latino representation in administrative, faculty, and staff positions;
- Implement curriculum reforms at all levels, but particularly at the elementary and secondary levels;
- Improve the quality of teacher training in general and of bilingual teacher preparation in particular;
- Improve recruitment of Latinos into professions where there are current shortages;

- Assess the impact of amnesty and immigration on the educational system; and
- Broaden the scope of business initiatives in the field of education to include the very poor.

3. Economic Development

With increasing numbers of Latinos joining the work force, the economic opportunities for Latinos are becoming more diverse. To begin with, Latinos in Los Angeles County typically find themselves in service-oriented jobs, which are growing as a result of the general trend toward businesses that provide services and gather information. The growing recognition of the Latino market as an important economic base has led businesses to hire more Latinos who are educated and to train more Latinos as professionals. With this increasing demand, Latinos in business have become more skilled, sophisticated, and mainstream, and they are demanding accountability. In addition, a growing number of Latinos are moving away from the traditionally Latino professions of medicine, law, and social welfare and entering business and the computer sciences. In a changing world economy in which the United States is no longer the driving force, the corporate sector is hard pressed to bring its work force up to speed. Latinos could make a significant contribution to this aspect of economic renewal.

The recommendations regarding economic resource development revolve around eliminating Latino poverty and focusing on job development, employment training, and economic empowerment. The programmatic recommendations include the following:

- Develop initiatives that lend financial support to Latino entrepreneurial efforts;
- Develop subsidized child care programs for Latino working parents (especially single parents);
- Develop initiatives that not only educate the private sector about the importance of reaching Latinos but also assess how Latinos can best be educated (or trained) to meet the needs of the private sector;
- Develop education and training programs that provide technical knowledge regarding economic development and procurement;
- Develop mentorship programs that assist aspiring Latino business professionals;
- Develop work-study programs that include apprenticeship positions in business and the professions;
- Promote Latino participation on policymaking and resource allocation bodies;
- Establish long-range economic development plans for local Latino communities;
- Promote easier access for Latino businesses to the investment dollars of lending institutions;

- Promote more Latino business collaborations;
- Promote a greater emphasis on business initiatives that move poor Latinos into the middle class, not simply middle class Latinos into the upper class;
- Promote more private and public sector contracting and subcontracting to Latino firms;
- Promote efforts to reduce discrimination in the workplace; and
- Promote a greater responsiveness to the needs of Latinos in the labor movement.

4. Leadership Development

The base of Latino leadership in both the public and private sectors will undoubtedly expand considerably in the near future. Because of the large number of Latinos, public officials are now in a strong position to support causes of importance to Latinos and to develop leadership networks with them. In the private sector, the desire to tap the growing Latino market has led business organizations to promote more Latinos. Latino professionals and recently naturalized immigrants are a new and expanding source of Latino leaders.

The participants made the following programmatic recommendations for expanding the leadership base in the Latino community:

- Create more and broader leadership training and development programs that focus on technical, decision-making, and coalition-building skills;
- Provide programs addressing the development of negotiating skills that enable Latinos to handle differences of opinion openly and constructively and Latino leaders to obtain support from Anglos; and
- Encourage programs that promote bridge-building between old and new guard leadership.

Strategic recommendations were also made for establishing avenues to increase the political participation of Latinos. Political and civic education programs, for example, could single out persons with leadership potential for more extensive training. Establishing mechanisms for bridging the gap between new leaders in the immigrant community and the more established leadership is important as well.

Phase III -- Secondary Funding Priorities

The participants in Phase III did not expect that great or immediate advances would be made in the six remaining priority areas, which depend on the programs identified as primary priorities. The secondary funding priority areas are health, social services, immigration, legal issues, crime, and housing. In looking at these areas, participants attempted to identify program interventions that should be made in the near future to offset severely negative health and social conditions

present in the Latino community. Because the primary needs are still unmet, the secondary priorities are becoming more pressing. The following discussion describes the major obstacles and needs in each area and offers programmatic recommendations for addressing them.

5. Health

Participants viewed improving the health status of Latinos as being directly dependent on improving the educational, economic, and political status of the Latino community. The profit orientation of health care in this country has produced astronomical costs. To control costs while increasing availability (through, for example, universal health insurance) is difficult at best. Improving Latino health is a complicated issue that requires a multi-pronged cross-sectored approach--including the government, the community, the health insurance industry, and the medical providers themselves.

Thus the primary recommendation of the focus group participants was to convene a task force or coalition to assess the adequacy of the current system for the Latino community and develop a short-term plan for addressing unmet needs. The task force would include not only health care providers but also community activist groups, consumer interest groups, and church organizations. Involvement of the corporate and private sectors would be critical. The specific responsibilities of the task force would be the following:

- Review existing programs;
- Evaluate programs to see if they are meeting community needs;
- Make short-term program recommendations; and
- Develop a coordinated plan for implementing the short-term recommendations.

The participants recommended the following programs in addition to forming a task force:

- Preventive care programs, including prenatal and postnatal care;
- Education programs that focus on health promotion (for example, diet and self-examination);
- Outreach programs that increase knowledge about available services with special emphasis on the elderly;
- Mental health programs that deal with stress and other issues (for example, drugs and violence); and
- Programs that address the shortage of Latinos in the health professions, particularly those that work with immigrants.

The leaders cited the following examples of programs that would increase the number of Latino health professionals:

- Private sector initiatives that provide Latinos with incentives to go into the health field;
- Scholarship programs that enable Latino students to enter specific health career tracks in magnet schools;
- Mentoring programs that pair Latino youth with health professionals; and
- Recruitment programs directed to Latino paraprofessionals.

Additional strategic recommendations were also made:

- Promote health improvement as an economic issue. Improving the health status of Americans increases productivity on the job and makes the United States more competitive in the international economy;
- Address child care as a health care issue. Improving child care services improves the overall health of children (that is, higher self-esteem, less drug use, less delinquency); and
- Build coalitions with other needy populations experiencing the same difficulties. Adopt a more global perspective on this issue.

The remaining major needs in the area of Latino health may be met by improving access through attention to the following institutional factors:

- Broader health insurance coverage;
- More adequate medical facilities; and
- More Latino health providers.

6. Social Services

As in health policy, improving the delivery of social services to Latinos has many obstacles to overcome. For one, social services depend primarily on public funds, which are subject to political processes that generally are not responsive to Latino needs. In addition, the many bureaucratic layers of the public social service system are difficult to streamline because (1) turf issues frustrate implementation at various levels of government, (2) political officials do not recognize the need for change, and (3) Latinos do not hold influential positions. To date, private sector funding has gone to education, political participation, and economic development rather than to social services. Finally, the focus of social services changes with the times; whereas AIDS is being emphasized now, twenty years ago battered women were the major issue of concern. This, taken in total, makes it difficult to ensure that Latinos are served equitably. As in health, the focus groups recommended that a task force be convened to assess the adequacy of the social services being delivered to Latinos in Los Angeles County and to develop a plan for addressing unmet needs.

Before examining program options, the participants discussed a number of Latino target populations that need social services:

- Families;
- The poor, working poor, and middle class;
- Immigrants who are monolingual Spanish speakers and those who are ineligible for amnesty;
- Frail, low-income senior citizens;
- Heads of households;
- Gays and lesbians;
- Children with developmental disabilities;
- Families of incarcerated individuals; and
- Substance abusers.

The participants felt that meeting the social service needs of the Latino nuclear family would dramatically reduce the need for other social services, such as substance abuse counseling and treatment. However, addressing the needs of the Latino family would require long-term comprehensive intervention programs.

To develop a short-term agenda for improving social services to Latinos, the participants elected to focus on three types of programs and the activities that fall within each:

(1) Leadership and personal growth and development programs for children and youth that would:

- Hold conferences on higher education for dropouts and low-achievers;
- Use successful Latinos as role models to speak with and be accessible to students;
- Use mentors to expose children to life outside their immediate neighborhood;
- Teach parents how to support their children's growth and development as well as how to deal with parenting issues;
- Promote corporate involvement in an adopt-a-school program;
- Teach girls team-building and divert children and youth from the street into positive activities;
- Deal with emotional and physical development issues, including sexual issues; and
- Teach decision-making and problem-solving skills and enhance self-esteem.

(2) More high-quality, subsidized child care programs that would:

- Build cognitive and social skills;
- Encourage parents to participate and respond to parental needs (through, for example, parenting classes, support for single mothers);
- Emphasize the health needs of children through health education, health assessment, and nutrition programs;
- Employ established staffing standards for employees and incorporate bilingual and bicultural requirements; and
- Extend their hours of operation.

(3) Outreach programs to make social services more accessible to vulnerable groups (such as high-risk youth, single mothers, the elderly, Spanish monolinguals) and that would:

- Teach recent immigrants, particularly mothers, how to use social service systems;
- Use natural leaders in the community, the churches, and other groups who are familiar with the current infrastructure of services to educate recent immigrants;
- Address the needs of immigrant families who do not qualify for amnesty;
- Offer food and shelter support services;
- Teach literacy and English classes; and
- Coordinate identifying the needs of immigrants and helping them gain access to necessary services.

7. Immigration

Immigrants have many needs, particularly since enactment of the IRCA legislation. Although the needs are many, the focus group participants felt that addressing immigration issues comprehensively by the year 2000 was unrealistic. In the first place, too many competing interests (business, government, community) have a stake in the problems of immigrants, and the Latino community itself is divided on immigration issues. Furthermore, decisions on immigration policy are being made at the federal level with no input from the local level. Complicating the issue is the need for a mass reorganization of the INS, which is unlikely. Finally, immigration issues are becoming complicated by racial and ethnic issues, as Latino immigrants are having to compete with other immigrant groups for certain benefits. In particular, Pacific Asian immigrants are getting benefits (for example, welfare and job training) that are rarely available to Latino immigrants.

Fulfilling the needs of immigrants means not only making support services available, but also changing prevailing social attitudes. The image of Latino immigrants as a drain on or a burden

to society must be changed, and society must stop using them as scapegoats for its problems. The rights of Latino immigrants must also be redefined, and Latinos must be mobilized and encouraged to use their new rights as citizens. Of course, changing social attitudes is a long-term endeavor.

For the short term, participants in Phase III of the focus groups concentrated on recommendations that would increase the availability of support services to recent immigrants. These programmatic recommendations resemble those proposed for other policy areas. The recommendations targeted two immigrant populations: those who qualified for amnesty and now must pass an exam to qualify for citizenship and those who remain undocumented.

The participants focused their short-term programmatic recommendations on four types of programs and their accompanying activities:

(1) Outreach programs to make immigrants more aware of community services that would:

- Develop media and other outreach efforts that motivate immigrants trying to qualify for citizenship to complete the immigration process;
- Adopt culturally sensitive methods of reaching the undocumented, particularly through churches;
- Institute a hotline information and referral clearinghouse through which immigrants could report fraud and violence and obtain answers to concerns;
- Conduct media campaigns to change the public's image of immigrants, particularly that of adolescents;
- Compile a resource directory of immigrant services and distribute it through the mass media; and
- Use the Neighborhood Watch concept and mobile vans to disseminate information to immigrants.

(2) Programs targeting disrupted immigrant families that would:

- Teach immigrant women and provide them with information about child development, birth control, domestic violence, consumer education, basic survival skills, and how to use the system;
- Address bicultural issues through parenting programs;
- Offer prenatal care services to immigrant women;
- Use media and culturally based approaches (*pláticas*) to make women aware of existing services; and
- Train service providers to be sensitive to immigrant women and develop materials, such as glossaries of terminology, appropriate for different groups of Latino immigrants.

(3) Programs for immigrants who are eligible for amnesty that would:

- Develop not only reading and writing, but also critical thinking and analytic skills;

(3) Programs for immigrants who are eligible for amnesty that would:

- Develop not only reading and writing, but also critical thinking and analytic skills;
- Increase the immigrant's understanding of how the dominant culture thinks;
- Teach basic survival skills, including assertiveness training; and
- Assume that retaining cultural and native traditions is valuable in a multicultural society.

(4) Programs that sensitize agencies working with immigrants (for example, the Immigration and Naturalization Service and social service agencies).

The participants also recommended the following strategies for affecting Latino immigration policy:

- Use centralized sites to conduct outreach to immigrants;
- Involve churches in all service activities;
- Encourage public-private partnerships for program funding.

8. Legal Services

Major obstacles still hamper the legal standing of Latinos. The leaders strongly felt that changes in the legal system are predicated on improving the educational status of the Latino community. Educational improvements would increase political participation, thereby leading to changes in the legal system. Such a process would, of course, take a long time. Although more common than before, class-action suits alone will not resolve the long-term problems inherent in the legal system. The legal system has proven to be unreliable, thus compelling the Latino community to focus on self-determination, that is, taking matters into its own hands. Moreover, the number of new Latino attorneys is declining, which will reduce the ability of Latinos to influence the system. In addition to the legal assistance associated with immigration, participants felt that the Latino community in general and in Los Angeles in particular needs the following:

- More access to community legal aid services;
- More access to civil court representation;
- Assistance with landlord disputes;
- Assistance with discrimination matters;
- Assistance with problems with the health and legal services; and
- More Spanish language interpreters in the courts.

They also made three major short-term programmatic recommendations related to legal issues and Latinos:

- Offer low-cost community legal aid services;
- Create legal services that would assist immigrants, especially those not eligible for amnesty; and
- Establish paralegal training programs aimed at Latinos.

9. Crime

The problem of crime and the Latino community is interrelated with other problems, making it particularly difficult to tackle. To reduce crime requires addressing its relationship with economic survival issues and with the weakening family structure. In addition, the stereotypes of the Latino family that are being perpetuated by the larger society contribute to Latino low self-esteem and poor self-image. Also, coalition-building that brings various sectors of society (community, church, family) together to deal with crime has been piecemeal and virtually absent.

The focus group participants felt that crime, particularly gangs and drugs, were a manifestation of the larger dilemmas and problems besetting Latino communities. They felt a need to minimize or eliminate crime as a "defining characteristic" of Latino communities and recommended the following:

- Improve community-police relations; and
- Hold the media, particularly television and the movie industry, responsible for their glorification of gangs and drugs.

They also identified programs that could begin to address the problem of crime:

- Youth diversion programs;
- Family-focused crime prevention education programs;
- Community-based drug and alcohol abuse prevention programs;
- Education and job training and placement programs designed for young Latino offenders; and
- Media projects that provide positive role models for Latinos.

10. Housing

Housing policy issues have been severely neglected in this country because other problems are so pressing. Yet soaring prices and decreasing public support for affordable housing are

making home ownership a luxury of the past. Latinos, because they have generally low incomes, have been affected by the housing crisis more severely than the general population.

Concerned with the lack of adequate housing, the focus group participants recommended that a high priority be given to increasing Latino representation on policy-setting bodies that deal with issues such as rent control and that public-private partnerships provide affordable housing. In particular, they wanted to see the housing needs of undocumented immigrants being addressed.

The short-term agenda of programs suggested by the focus group participants include the following:

- Public and private partnerships including community-based organizations to create affordable housing appropriate for the larger size of Latino families;
- Housing programs for the Latino youth-at-risk and homeless (who typically include entire families);
- Revitalization programs for Latino neighborhoods;
- Educational programs to inform Latinos, particularly single-parent families, about the availability of affordable housing; and
- Mortgage programs to foster first-time home ownership for Latinos.

CONCLUSION

The focus group component of the Los Angeles County Latino Assessment Study produced a comprehensive picture of the types of programs and strategies that Latino leaders feel are necessary to making institutions responsive to Latino needs. The focus groups used information collected by the community and leadership surveys to develop an agenda for dealing with the issues and problems that concern Latinos in Los Angeles County. By recommending specific programs and setting priorities based on realistic expectations, they created a blueprint for action that corporations, government agencies, and philanthropies can use to determine how they allocate funds to benefit the Latino community. The focus groups not only affirmed the findings of the other LACLAS activities, they produced an informed discussion of the problems and solutions facing Latinos in Los Angeles County.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The LACLAS study was commissioned by a group of Latino community leaders in 1986. This ad hoc group eventually evolved into the Study's Community Advisory Council, chaired by Beatriz Olvera-Stotzer. The Council oversaw the project's activities. The study was executed in its entirety by the Tomás Rivera Center under the direction of its president, Dr. Arturo Madrid. The co-principal investigators for the study were Dr. Julie Solis and Dr. David López-Lee. Throughout the two-year effort, a technical review committee, chaired by Dr. Leobardo Estrada, worked to assure that quality of the highest order was maintained.

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SPECIAL THANKS TO:

Mr. William Díaz, The Ford Foundation

Mr. Henry Ramos, The Ford Foundation

Ms. Luz Vega, The James Irvine Foundation

Mr. Gene Wilson, The ARCO Foundation

The LACLAS study and its related reports were made possible through funding from The Ford Foundation, The Arco Foundation, The James Irvine Foundation, and Mervyn's.

Photos: *Courtesy of La Opinion*